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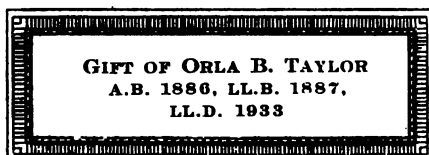
THE REAL MARTYR OF ST. HELENA

BY THOMAS FILLANS

MARGUERITE MACDONOUGH HOLM



HER BOOK



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**THE REAL MARTYR OF  
ST. HELENA**

BY THE SAME AUTHOR  
**THE CRIME OF 1812**  
AND  
**ITS RETRIBUTION**

Translated from the Personal Narrative  
of the Russian Campaign of  
Lieut.-Colonel Labaume

By  
**T. DUNDAS PILLANS**  
(*Second Printing*)

Demy 8vo. Cloth, \$1.75 net.

NEW YORK: McBRIDE, NAST &  
COMPANY.







SIR HUDSON LOWE.

*From a Pencil Drawing.]*

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of 2

# THE REAL MARTYR OF ST. HELENA

BY  
SUNDAS PILLANS

"The use of the martyr is to be held against  
calumny. Calumny is a necessary ingredient in  
the composition of true greatness, calumny and  
calumnies are the tests of truth."

—EDMUND BURKE.

NEW YORK  
J. B. LIPPINCOTT & COMPANY

1893



*Portrait of General*

1811-1812



# THE REAL MARTYR OF ST. HELENA

By  
T. DUNDAS PILLANS



"The use of character is to be a shield against calumny. Obloquy is a necessary ingredient in the composition of all true glory; calumny and abuse are essential parts of triumph."

—EDMUND BURKE.

NEW YORK  
McBRIDE, NAST & COMPANY

1913

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To the living representatives of  
the family of an honourable but cruelly traduced  
English soldier  
this book is respectfully dedicated by  
THE AUTHOR.



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## PREFACE

IN his thrilling narrative of the Moscow campaign of 1812, Eugène Labaume says of Napoleon that he will be for historians the riddle of the human heart.

But there is a greater enigma connected with his career, and that is the growth and persistency of the "Napoleonic Legend," which is based upon an imaginary Napoleon that has no foundation in fact; a Napoleon drawn by himself, without the least resemblance to the real man.

This fancy portrait, limned at St. Helena, depicts him as brimful of benevolence; the representative of liberalism; the emancipator of enslaved peoples; the sworn foe of despots; the regenerator of Europe; who was perpetually ingeminating peace, but whose pacific aspirations were continually thwarted by the satanic machinations of the European Powers, prompted by the arch enemy of "enlightenment"—England.

In spite of the fact that every action of his life contradicts these impudent assertions, the belief in them



still flourishes with a vigour as great as when they were first promulgated. It has been said that faith can remove mountains, but the tenacity of the Napoleonic superstition shows that nothing can move faith.

The claim of Napoleon to be called "great" can only be admitted if we accept Fielding's dictum that greatness consists in bringing all manner of mischief on mankind. If, on the other hand, greatness means nobility of character; the desire unselfishly to promote human happiness; permanence of achievement; judgment in conceiving vast designs; moderation and justice in success, and dignity and resignation in misfortune, then never had any human being less title to the distinction than Napoleon Bonaparte.

Nothing shows more conclusively the hollowness of Napoleon's claim to greatness than the facts narrated in the following pages. Those who play for high stakes should know how to lose with a good grace. For years Napoleon had been deposing kings with contempt for their rights and feelings; but when, in the turn of the great roulette of Fortune, he was served in the same manner, he displayed all the petty spitefulness of a militant suffragette. It has recently been suggested that our wild women should be deported to St. Helena. The *genius loci* certainly makes it a fitting place of

exile, and they would only have to study the performances of Las Cases and his "god" at Longwood, to become adepts in the congenial sport of tormenting their custodians.

/ It is curious to reflect that Napoleon not only brought untold misery upon mankind during his lifetime, but that even the grave did not end his power for mischief. It was the bringing back of his remains from St. Helena that rekindled the fire of Bonapartism in France; and led to the downfall of the July monarchy, thus opening the way to the Second Empire, which fittingly ended at Sedan, as the first had ended at Waterloo.

The world is still reaping the harvest of evil which Napoleon sowed. His cruel and ruthless treatment of Prussia after the battle of Jena, and his creation of the Confederation of the Rhine under French control, originated that bitter hatred between the French and German nations, which still exists in all its rank malignity, and is the real cause of the enormous armaments which are draining the resources of the European peoples at the present day. Moreover, the worship of mere brute force—the glorification of might against right—which is at the bottom of Napoleonolatry, has created the bastard imperialism which is one of the curses of our time. The menace of Socialism is also ultimately

due to this form of devil-worship. Groaning under the weight of a gigantic war expenditure in a time of universal peace, the masses are driven to look for a remedy for their intolerable evils in schemes which strike at the very root of civilized society. Every country in Europe, impoverished through this fearful blood-tax, is seething with disaffection to the existing order, and in the German Reichstag Socialism is now represented by the most numerous party in that body, the mandatories of over four million Socialist voters.

This curse of militarism threatens even to invade our own shores, and an influential party is busily at work seeking to transform this ancient maritime monarchy, with all its proud traditions of individual liberty, into a military empire. Should this attempt succeed, and our country be at the same time saddled with the curse of "protection" to industry, Socialism, which flourishes on the misery of the masses, will advance by leaps and bounds, and become as great a menace to civilized society here as it now is in Continental countries.

France has suffered more from the sinister influence of Napoleonism than any other nation, and yet she has enclosed the body of her evil genius in a gorgeous and fittingly theatrical tomb. The fact recalls Burke's

observation on the temples erected by the natives of India to Warren Hastings—he saw no reason for astonishment. He knew the Hindoos erected shrines not only to the benignant deities of light and plenty, but also to the fiends who preside over smallpox and murder.

It would be over-sanguine to suppose that those who admire the murderer of the Duc d'Enghien and the desolator of Europe will be influenced by the pettiness and paltry malignity displayed by their hero at Longwood. But at all events it is well that the fiction of England's perfidy and Lowe's brutality should once again be shattered, and that some reparation should be made for the grievous injustice that an honourable Englishman has suffered from the libels of unscrupulous partisans.

T. D. P.

12, TENBY MANSIONS,  
NOTTINGHAM STREET,  
LONDON, W.  
*May, 1913.*

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# THE REAL MARTYR OF ST. HELENA

## CHAPTER I

### THE SURRENDER

ON the night of the 18th of June, 1815, Napoleon fled from the field of Waterloo, as he had before fled from Egypt, from Russia, from Leipzig. He left the mangled remains of the flower of the finest army he ever commanded on the slopes of Mont St. Jean ; and forcing his way through the panic-stricken horde which alone remained of it, hastened back to Paris.<sup>1</sup>

The game was up. The whole colossal edifice which had been erected by violence and cemented with blood during a period of nearly twenty years had fallen with a crash. It was a final and irreparable catastrophe. In 1814 he had been forced to abdicate, but the outlook was not then hopeless. In 1815 his downfall was complete ; there was no possibility of stemming, even

<sup>1</sup> *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*. Las Cases. Ed. 1823. Vol. i, part 1, pp. 15-25.



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for a moment, the inrush of the invading flood ; a defensive campaign in France like that of the previous year was impossible ; for there was no army with which to fight it. The only thing left for the defeated despot was to provide for his own safety.

He abdicated once more, and on the 25th of June quitted Paris for Malmaison. After having vainly offered his services to the Provisional Government as a "simple citizen at the head of the troops," he found his retreat becoming unsafe, and left for Rochefort, with the idea of sailing thence for the United States of America.

<sup>1</sup> He arrived at Rochefort on the 3rd of July, where he was met by his brother Joseph, Las Cases, Montholon, Gourgaud and Bertrand, and various plans were discussed for getting him away from France. It was proposed to smuggle him out in a Danish merchant vessel ; to force a passage with two French frigates lying in the roads, and even to retire into the interior and inaugurate a guerilla warfare against the allied armies. All these ideas were abandoned. An English squadron was cruising vigilantly off the coast, making any attempt to escape by sea hopeless, and even Napoleon had had enough of fighting. The only alternative was surrender, and it became then a question as to which of the Powers was likely to treat him most indulgently.

<sup>1</sup> *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, vol. i, part 1, pp. 27-36,

Of the four, three of them had had quite recent experience of the realities of a French invasion; and had seen their capitals occupied by French armies. Moscow had been destroyed, and Prussia had been dismembered. Blücher had uttered dire threats of how he would treat Napoleon if ever he fell into his hands. Alexander, with the recollection of 1812 fresh upon him, was likely to provide him with an allotment in Siberia, and Francis, who had not only seen his capital twice occupied, but had been obliged to sacrifice his daughter to the Corsican parvenu, would probably have given him lodgings in Spielberg. England alone had had no first-hand experience of the capacity of a French army for lust and rapine. Her command of the sea had saved her from such horrors. It was therefore likely that she would give him better terms than any of the other Powers; and moreover, her ships were in the offing, and afforded a ready asylum for the fallen despot. There was, in any case, no time to be lost, for if he remained much longer in France his personal safety would be in danger, either from his fickle quondam subjects, or from the restored Bourbons, and their allies.

<sup>1</sup> In these circumstances the Count de Las Cases was sent to interview Captain Maitland of the *Bellerophon*. The envoy asked Maitland if he had received a safe-

<sup>1</sup> *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, vol i. part 1, pp. 28-36.

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conduct from the British Government for Napoleon's departure for the United States. The reply was in the negative, Captain Maitland adding that if the French frigates attempted to sail they would be attacked by the English squadron. Las Cases was told that Napoleon could, if he liked, be taken to England, and that in such event, he would have no cause to fear ill-treatment at the hands of the Government. With this Las Cases returned to his master, and fresh conferences were held on the situation.

On the 14th of July Las Cases had a second interview with Maitland, who told him that if Napoleon wished to embark at once for England he was authorized to conduct him thither. He added as his private opinion—and this was confirmed by several other captains present at the interview—that he had no doubt that Napoleon would receive in England all the consideration which he could reasonably expect; that the Prince Regent and his ministers were not endowed with the arbitrary authority prevailing on the Continent; and that the British people were imbued with a generous sentiment and a liberality of opinion superior to the sovereign himself. Las Cases replied that he would report to the Emperor the substance of this conversation, and that he knew Napoleon well enough to think that he would not be averse from reposing confidence in England, in order to obtain there facilities for continuing his journey to the United States. He

then enlarged upon the possibility of Napoleon continuing the struggle, from which he only shrank owing to his horror of shedding blood ; and upon his "generosity" in abdicating and thus facilitating the restoration of peace, and his firm determination to exile himself so as to make that peace a lasting one. Las Cases having repeated that the Emperor, in view of the circumstances, would probably accept Maitland's offer to conduct him to England "with a view to obtaining there a safe-conduct to America," Maitland was careful to reply that it must be clearly understood that he could not guarantee the granting of such safe-conduct, and the interview ended.

It is necessary that this conference, the account of which we have taken from Las Cases' own statement, should be carefully kept in mind in view of the subsequent charges of "perfidy" brought by Napoleon against the British Government. There is not the slightest foundation for such a charge. It was part of the ingenious web of sophistry and mendacity spun by Bonaparte during his exile at St. Helena in order to justify his pose as a martyr to the craft and treachery of England. The reasons advanced by Las Cases for his master's surrender are equally baseless. Napoleon gave himself up because he had no alternative, and the reluctance to shed blood attributed to a man who had been deluging Europe with carnage for some twenty years is simply ludicrous.

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In regard to these interviews, however, we have a much more reliable witness than the Frenchman, who, as we shall presently see, was one of the trickiest and most unscrupulous of mortals. Captain (afterwards Rear-Admiral) Maitland has given us his version in his book, *The Surrender of Napoleon*, and it is hardly necessary to say that his statements can be accepted with full reliance on their truth.

Dealing with Napoleon's "Protest," dated "On board the *Bellerophon*," 4th of August, 1815, in which the Emperor concocts his fable about the "perfidy" of England, Maitland says: "On the above I shall only observe that no snare had been laid, either on the part of His Majesty's Government or mine. I was placed before Rochefort for the open purpose of preventing Bonaparte from making his escape from that port; and the exertions of myself and those under my command had been so completely successful that the intention of forcing past the ships under my orders, as well as every other plan proposed, of which there appear to have been several, were abandoned as utterly hopeless. And so far was I from seeking communication with Napoleon, that all the flags of truce proceeding from him were strongly reprobated by me as improper, except in extraordinary cases, and were only resorted to when, as it appears from Lord Keith's letter of the 23rd of July, orders had been given for his arrest, and when (as has since been proved) one or more intimations

had been given by the officer commanding in Isle d'Aix, that if he did not depart he would be under the necessity of detaining him. Besides, it is now perfectly ascertained that the determination of repairing to England was adopted at a consultation held by Bonaparte on the night of the 13th of July, when his letter to the Prince Regent was written, and Messrs. Las Cases and Lallmande were sent on the morning of the 14th to discover if I would receive him on board the *Bellerophon* and convey him to that country.

“ On the morning of the 6th of August, when walking the deck with Monsieur Las Cases, he for the first time mentioned that he understood me to have assured him that the Emperor would be well received in England, and allowed to reside there. I replied, ‘ I cannot conceive how you could so far misunderstand me, as I constantly, in my communications with you, stated that I could make no promises whatever : that I thought my orders would bear me out in receiving him on board, and conveying him to England ; but even in doing that, I acted very much upon my own responsibility. You questioned me frequently as to my private opinion, and as I was quite ignorant upon the subject, I could only say I had no reason to believe he would be ill received.’ It did not, however, require my assistance to raise the hopes of those about Bonaparte respecting the manner in which he was to be received in England ; as one of his followers, on the passage home,

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asked me if I thought the Prince Regent would confer the order of the Garter upon him."

Maitland goes on to say that Las Cases, in his interviews, concealed the fact that he spoke English, which could, says the sailor, only have been with the object of throwing him off his guard, so that advantage might be taken of any expressions that fell from him or the other English officers present, in their imperfect French. Even after he was on board the *Bellerophon* with Napoleon, Las Cases continued the same deceit, affecting not to be able to speak English, although able to read it. But Maitland soon after discovered the tricky Frenchman's duplicity, for in a letter received from an officer of the *Northumberland* the writer said: "I do not know whether Las Cases ever let you know he could speak English; but this I can assure you, that he speaks it very near as well as Madame Bertrand, and can hold a conversation, or maintain an argument in it, with as much fluency as she can."

Las Cases shortly afterwards descended to a lower depth of meanness, which is thus recorded by Maitland: "On the morning of the 7th of August, 1815, Count Las Cases made an application to me for permission to wait on Lord Keith, having a communication to make to him. I, in consequence, went to his lordship, and obtained leave to send him. When the Admiral came on board the *Bellerophon* in the forenoon to attend Bonaparte in his removal to the *Northumber-*

*land*, he informed me that Monsieur Las Cases had represented to him I had promised Bonaparte should be well received in England and allowed to remain there." Maitland was naturally disgusted at this mean attempt to get him into hot water with the authorities, and when saying good-bye to De Montholon took occasion to express his indignation. "I feel much hurt," he said, "that Count Las Cases should have stated to Lord Keith that I had promised Bonaparte should be well received in England, or indeed made promises of any sort. I have endeavoured to conduct myself with integrity and honour throughout the whole of this transaction, and therefore cannot allow such an assertion to go uncontradicted." "Oh," replied De Montholon, "Las Cases negotiated this business; it has turned out very differently from what he and all of us expected. He attributes the Emperor's situation to himself, and is therefore desirous of giving it the best countenance he can."

Thus we see that this man was capable of seeking to extricate himself from an unpleasant position by gross misrepresentations of his conversations with Maitland, utterly regardless of the injury he might inflict upon a gallant and unsuspecting officer, from whom he had received the greatest kindness and consideration. We shall find, as we proceed with our story, that this was merely the beginning of a course of conduct which he pursued to the very last day of his residence at St.



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Helena, and which stamps him as a person utterly devoid of truth and honour so far as his connection with Napoleon is concerned.

To resume the thread of our narrative. On the envoy's return a council was held and various plans were discussed. Escape in the Danish ship was discarded as impracticable, and it was decided that the blockade by the British squadron made escape in the frigates equally impossible. The only alternatives appeared to be to embark on a civil war or accept the offer of Captain Maitland. It was resolved to adopt the last-named course, on the ground that on board the *Bellerophon* Napoleon would be on British territory, and the English Government would be bound from that moment by the laws of hospitality, held sacred even by barbarous peoples. He would, moreover, find himself under the protection of the laws of England, and the British nation would have too much regard for their reputation not to seize with avidity this opportunity for displaying their magnanimity. To clinch the matter from this artless (or artful) standpoint, Napoleon wrote the following letter to the Prince Regent :

<sup>1</sup> "YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS,—

"Victim of the factions which distract my country and of the hatred of the great powers of Europe, I have

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires de Ste. Hélène*, vol. i. part 1, p. 34.

reached the end of my public career. I come, like Themistocles, to seat myself at the hearth of the British people ; I place myself under the protection of its laws, which I claim from your Royal Highness as the representative of the most powerful, the most persistent, and the most generous of my enemies."

Like all Napoleon's performances, this epistle shows a colossal capacity for calculated humbug. It was evidently written with the object of deluding simpletons into a belief in the reality of his pose of injured innocence. Read in the light of his subsequent conversations at St. Helena, it imputes to the British Government a credulous simplicity, almost beyond belief. The supreme object of his ambition had been to crush England, and to attain that object he had not only made war upon her by land and sea, but had sought to ruin her commerce by means of his "Continental System." It is true that the Berlin and Milan decrees only succeeded in ruining the commerce of the nations who had bowed beneath his yoke, and that those decrees had been the main cause of the general uprising against his intolerable tyranny. But they were the highest refinement of his diabolical hatred of England ; and had taught the British people that so long as he had any power for mischief left, the island kingdom could hope for no security in mind, body or estate. As to seating himself at the hearth of the English nation, it was not long

since he had threatened this country with an invasion which would have blackened every hearth in the land, and let loose his devastating hordes to repeat the horrors of the Spanish and Moscow campaigns in the "garden of England."

Had the British Government been fools enough to be deluded by his impudent appeal, we know from his own lips what would have been the consequences. Let Las Cases himself speak on this point. "He had a secret satisfaction in accepting the hospitality of the *Bellerophon*. To be in England was to be within easy reach of France. He knew, of course, that there he would not be entirely a free agent ; but he hoped to make himself heard, and besides what chances there were in the new direction which he might give to events ! " "The English Ministry," he proceeded, "are either enemies of their country or sold to the foreigner, and they have found my sole personality too dangerous. They have come to the conclusion in London that it would have been more powerful than the entire Opposition ; that they would either have been compelled to alter their whole system or resign their places ; and to preserve their places they have, with the most abject cowardice, sacrificed the true interests of their country—the triumph and glory of her laws, the peace of the world, the welfare of Europe, the prosperity and regard of future generations." He was, in fact, to settle himself in England, within twenty miles of the

French coast, and there to intrigue with his French supporters, and turn our party system to his own account. It was a very pretty arrangement, but happily it was too transparent to succeed, and the British Government wisely determined to put an end for ever to his career as a disturber of the peace of the world.

The fact is the Powers of Europe had learnt by this time that no reliance whatever was to be placed upon any statement that Napoleon might make. To use a colloquialism, they had been "fed up" with his violated pledges and chronic mendacity, and they were fully alive to the necessity of securing the peace of the world by securing his person. To have allowed him to seek an asylum in the United States of America would only have been one degree less dangerous than to permit him to settle in England. He himself has also in this instance disclosed what he would have done had he been allowed to take up his abode in America. <sup>1</sup> Joseph was already established there. He had managed to secure for himself a considerable share of the plunder amassed by the Bonaparte family during their long course of brigandage. He had purchased a property in the State of New York where, Napoleon heard, he had gathered around him a considerable number of Frenchmen. The situation of this property in the

<sup>1</sup> *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, vol. ii. p. 336.

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northern part of the State appeared to the Emperor to have been chosen by his brother with the double object of showing friendship for the United States and enmity to England. It was evident, he said, that it would have a natural attraction for the population of Canada, which was largely French, and had still a feeling of hostility towards their British conquerors. <sup>1</sup> Joseph's establishment, he added, would soon be the rendezvous of able and influential men. From that centre would issue powerful counterblasts in the press against the system which had triumphed in Europe; already at Elba he had conceived this idea. Had he succeeded in escaping to America, he reckoned on gathering around him all his intimates, and upon having at his disposal some forty millions of francs. His residence would thus become the nucleus of a national reunion, and of a new party. Before the lapse of a year, events in France and the rest of Europe would have grouped around him sixty thousand people, the greater number with means, ability and knowledge, and his resources would have reached a hundred millions. He would have delighted in realizing this dream, which would have brought him new glory. Continuing, he stated that he could easily have got away from France in disguise, but that he shrank from this course as beneath his dignity. We have seen, however, that he only surrendered to Mait-

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. pp. 337 and 338.

land because he found escape to America impossible ; and as to the humiliation of disguise, the hollowness of this is evident from the fact that in 1814, on his journey through France to Elba, he stooped to assuming the great coat and fur cap of the Austrian commissioner to escape the fury of his quondam subjects.

Such was the programme which Napoleon sketched out for his operations in the United States, had he succeeded in escaping thither. A pretty vista of trouble for England in particular, and the world in general, it discloses. Fortunately, by this time the Powers had become fully alive to the capacity of Napoleon for mischief ; and of his inexhaustible ingenuity in wriggling out of tight corners, and turning even his reverses to profitable account. They had seen him apparently lost in Egypt, ruined in Russia, and broken at Leipzig, and he had surmounted all these disasters and appeared again as the scourge of mankind. They wisely concluded that even Waterloo might not be the end if he were still left at large ; and his subsequent disclosures as to how he would have schemed and plotted in England or the United States to throw Europe once more into the seething cauldron of his insatiable ambition fully confirm the wisdom of the course they pursued.

Napoleon, then, having no alternative but to surrender himself to England, went on board the *Bellerophon*. Las Cases asserts that had he known the fate in store for him, he would not have taken this step, but enough

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has been said to show that after carefully considering the practicability of all other courses, he and his friends had come to the conclusion that this was the only one open to him.

•

## CHAPTER II

### THE PLACE OF EXILE

TOWARDS evening on the 24th of July the *Bellerophon* anchored in the roads at Torbay, and Maitland at once informed Lord Keith, the Admiral commanding in the Channel, of the arrival of the distinguished prisoner. The water was soon covered with an immense crowd of boats, filled with people anxious to catch a sight of the redoubtable "Boney," who had been for so long the terror of Europe and the inveterate foe of their country. The caged lion gratified the sightseers by appearing on the bridge, for at that period he had not begun to show the persistent ill-temper which he afterwards displayed at St. Helena.

On the 26th orders came to bring him on to Plymouth, where he arrived at four o'clock in the afternoon. Here the crowds were kept at bay. Armed boats patrolled around the ship and none was allowed to approach. Sinister rumours began to circulate among the French prisoners on the arrival of a special courier from London, one of which was that the Emperor was to be imprisoned in the Tower, and it was also



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whispered that the Island of St. Helena was to be his destination.

Napoleon deluded himself with the idea that his letter to the Prince Regent was tantamount to a conditional surrender, and that it would be accepted as such, but any dispassionate mind must see that such an idea was entirely without foundation. He had been explicitly informed by Maitland that his surrender must be made unconditionally, and it is obvious that the interpretation of such a letter must be as much a matter for the recipient as for the writer; otherwise correspondence of that nature would be reduced to a one-sided absurdity, and would involve the ridiculous assertion that whatever one man proposed another must accept. The Prince Regent never invited the Emperor to write to him at all; the letter was what is vulgarly called a "try-on" on the part of the writer, whose cool proposal to seat himself at the hearth of the British people the Prince was in no way bound to admit. It was mainly on this letter, however, that Napoleon founded his charge of treachery against the British Government, and the epistle was manifestly concocted with that object.

All doubts as to the Emperor's fate were soon put to rest. Lord Keith and a representative of the British Ministry were sent to inform Napoleon of the decision. He protested that he was the guest of England; that he was in no sense a prisoner; that he had voluntarily placed himself under the protection of English law;

that the sacred laws of hospitality were being violated, and that he would never willingly submit to the outrage which was being perpetrated upon him. Violence alone compelled him to suffer it.

The following is the substance of the memorandum of the British Government which was communicated to Napoleon by Lord Keith.

<sup>1</sup> As it is desirable that General Bonaparte should be acquainted without delay with the intentions of the British Government in his regard, your lordship will communicate to him the following information.

It would be inconsistent with our duty to our country and to His Majesty's allies, to allow General Bonaparte to possess the means or opportunity to disturb anew the peace of Europe. For this reason it becomes absolutely imperative that his personal liberty should be restricted so long as that may be necessary to secure this first and all-important object.

The Island of St. Helena has been selected for his future residence; its climate is healthy, and its situation will make it possible to treat him with more indulgence there than elsewhere, in view of the indispensable precautions that it would be necessary to adopt to secure his person.

<sup>1</sup> *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, vol. i. p. 56.

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General Bonaparte will be allowed to choose from among those persons who have accompanied him to England, with the exception of Generals Savary and Lallemand, three officers, who, together with his doctor, will be permitted to accompany him to St. Helena, and will not be allowed to leave the island without the sanction of the British Government.

Vice-Admiral Sir George Cockburn, who has been appointed Commander-in-Chief at the Cape of Good Hope and the adjacent seas, will conduct General Bonaparte and his suite to St. Helena, and will receive detailed instructions concerning the execution of his mission.

Sir George Cockburn will probably be ready to start in a few days, which makes it desirable that General Bonaparte should select without delay the persons who are to accompany him.

This document presents in a singularly lucid and convincing way the situation with which the British Ministry found itself faced. Two facts were perfectly evident—first, that it was absolutely essential to the peace of the world that Napoleon Bonaparte should not break loose again. The terrible experience of the last twenty years, during almost the whole of which Europe had been in a chronic state of anarchy and bloodshed from the Mediterranean to the Baltic, and from Moscow

to Lisbon, had convinced the civilized world of that one salient fact. It was therefore imperative so to secure the arch-disturber that his power for mischief should be ended once for all. Three courses were possible to achieve this end. Blücher's was the most certain—he would have had him shot, but the Powers shrank from that drastic method. Imprisonment for life in a European fortress would have had the disadvantage of turning the prison into a centre of intrigue, and besides, there was always the possibility of Napoleon emulating the evasive performances of a Latude and effecting his escape. The third and most merciful course was that which was adopted—to intern him in some territory far beyond the confines of Europe, from which escape would be altogether impossible, but where at the same time he could be allowed a comparative freedom without jeopardizing the main object of his detention.

<sup>1</sup> The Island of St. Helena was an ideal spot for such a purpose. It is situated in the midst of the vast Atlantic, in 15° 55' S. Lat. and 5° 49' 45" W. Long., 600 miles from the Island of Ascension (the nearest land), 1,200 miles from the coast of Africa, and nearly 2,000 miles from that of America. It is about 10½ miles long and about 6½ miles broad, with a mean elevation of 1,400 ft. When first seen at sea it presents the appearance of a naked and rugged rock, but upon a nearer approach the central eminences are seen to be clothed

<sup>1</sup> *Gazetteer of the World.*

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with verdure. Coming still closer, these heights are concealed from view, and nothing is then beheld but a girdle of inaccessible precipices, overhanging the ocean—some of them exhibiting the most fantastic shapes—and others rent down to their base, disclosing enormous chasms. Within half a furlong of land there is a depth of from 10 to 12 fathoms, gradually deepening for a mile to 28 fathoms, while beyond this the sea is of unfathomable depth, and the surf that beats upon the shore, especially about Christmas-time, is tremendous. There are only four practicable landing-places, on the principal of which James Town, the seat of government, is situated. All of these landing-places were strongly fortified, and every salient eminence on the island had its look-out station.

St. Helena is unequally divided by a lofty chain of hills, which runs in a curved direction nearly east and west, bending towards the south at each extremity, and from which alternate ridges and valleys branch off in various directions, but chiefly north and south. In a triangular space enclosed between lofty heights, about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles in length, and 350 yards broad at its base, lies James Town, which presents in its whole appearance a peculiar combination of military strength and rural simplicity. A fortified line extending from cliff to cliff, forms the anchorage, and is (or was) covered with cannon nearly level with the water's edge. Entering the town by a drawbridge, and through an arched gateway, Government

House, known usually as "the Castle," is seen on the left, while fronting the gateway is the church. The principal street contained about forty houses, and the whole town about 200. The roads which give access to the interior of the island, and which have been formed with incredible labour, are carried zig-zag up the sides of the hills. For two miles nothing but naked sterility and a rocky wilderness meet the eye, but this soon changes to wood-clad heights, verdant lawns, cultivated plantations and handsome little country seats. About three miles from the town, at the summit of a hill, is situated Plantation House, the Governor's country residence. It is a handsome, well-built edifice, and the grounds have been made by cultivation the most beautiful spot in the island. "Longwood," a name which has become historic, at about the same distance from James Town, is situated on an elevated plain, and has about it some 1,500 acres of good meadow land. In spite of the assertions of Napoleon and his partisans to the contrary, it is pleasantly situated, and the house, usually occupied by the Lieutenant-Governor, was by no means the squalid hovel described by the French captives. From 1808 to 1813 the writer's grandfather, General Broughton, was Lieutenant-Governor of St. Helena, and the writer's mother was born at Longwood. She always had pleasant recollections of the house, which she described as a very comfortable country residence, in an agreeable and healthy situation. It was, of course,

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put into thorough repair for the reception of the French exiles, and considerable additions to it were subsequently made.

It was part of the policy of the French exiles to represent the Island of St. Helena as a "barren rock," but this is as absolute a fable as the other statements concocted by the Longwood romancers. As a matter of fact, St. Helena, though, as we have said, presenting a forbidding appearance when first viewed from the sea, is one of the most picturesque, fertile and delightful islands in the world. Its soil is exuberant, and its geographical situation enables it to produce two crops every year.

<sup>1</sup> Major-General Beatson, who was Governor from 1808 to 1813, and who was an agricultural expert of great authority and varied experience, has described the island in his *Tracts relative to the Island of St. Helena*, published in 1816. In the preface to that most interesting and valuable work, he says that the results of his investigations and experiments were most satisfactory, exposing completely the fallacy of the popular idea that St. Helena was "a rocky and unproductive island, mostly devoid of soil, scantily supplied with water, subject to severe and unusual droughts, abounding with rats, and wholly incapable of extensive cultivation or improvement," and clearly demonstrating that

<sup>1</sup> *Tracts relative to the Island of St Helena*, Major-General Alexander Beatson.

many parts, so far from being desolate and barren, were pre-eminently fertile, and that the island in general was capable of the highest improvements, both in the cultivation of corn and all sorts of vegetables, and in raising valuable plantations of fruit and timber trees.

It is a duty as well as a pleasure to record here that this broad-minded and enlightened man—the best Governor that St. Helena ever possessed—not only expressed these views, but proved their accuracy by his own actions. He substituted the plough and the harrow for the spade, the rake and the hoe in the cultivation of the island, and obtained the services of a practical Norfolk farmer to teach the inhabitants the new methods. In face of the most dogged resistance of those he sought to benefit, who were quite impervious to argument and reason, he demonstrated the desirability of the “new-fangled innovations,” as they were contemptuously called, by his farming operations at Plantation House, which were zealously supported at Longwood by the Lieutenant-Governor, General Broughton, until accomplished facts converted the most obstinate, and the productiveness of the island was enormously increased with a corresponding increase in the prosperity of the inhabitants.

Not only is St. Helena highly productive, but its residential advantages are quite exceptional. The climate is delightful, exempt from the torrid heats of equatorial countries, and the bitter frosts of northern



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climes. <sup>1</sup> General Beatson describes it as "perhaps the mildest and most salubrious in the world," and he adds that invalids from India resort to the island, some of whom have been restored to perfect health after a few months' residence. Now, the commonest disorder of Anglo-Indians was liver complaint, and yet <sup>2</sup> Barry O'Meara, has the assurance to say that it was "a disease extremely prevalent and frequently fatal in the island." O'Meara, having staked his professional reputation upon his diagnosis of Napoleon's malady as chronic hepatitis induced by the climate of St. Helena, did not hesitate to add one lie more to the mass of falsehoods embodied in his *Voice from St. Helena*; but to the unimpeachable testimony of Beatson we may add that of an equally impartial witness, Walter Henry, who in his *Events of a Military Life* writes as follows: <sup>3</sup> "St. Helena is certainly a healthy island. During one period of twelve months we did not lose one man by disease, out of five hundred of the 66th. Notwithstanding the assertions of Napoleon's adherents, who had an interest in painting the place in as dark colours as they could, I must maintain that we had no endemic disease in the island."

The scenery is in places verdant and pastoral, and in

<sup>1</sup> *Tracts relative to the Island of St. Helena*, Beatson, pp. xxxiii. and xxxiv.

<sup>2</sup> *A Voice from St. Helena*, O'Meara, vol. i. p. 232.

<sup>3</sup> *Events of a Military Life*, Henry, vol. ii. p. 45.

others grand and impressive. Wooded and grassy valleys are interspersed with mountainous peaks and rocky defiles, so that within its narrow bounds exists an ever-changing panorama with which the eye is never tired.

## CHAPTER III

### THE VOYAGE TO ST. HELENA

ON the 4th of August the *Bellerophon* sailed westward, and Napoleon sent to Lord Keith<sup>1</sup> a protest, which had been drawn up by Las Cases, against the decision of the British Cabinet. This document was an amplification of his previous verbal remonstrances. It repeats the fable of his conditional surrender ; asserts that he was entrapped, and appeals to history, which he says will cover England with infamy for her treachery.

On the 6th the vessel cast anchor off Start Point, and shortly afterwards the *Northumberland*, which was to convey him to St. Helena, arrived. Admirals Keith and Cockburn came aboard the *Bellerophon*. The latter was in command of the *Northumberland*, and both Admirals had an interview with Napoleon, and acquainted him with the instructions they had received regarding his deportation. An inventory was to be made of all the money, notes and diamonds belonging to the Emperor and his suite, who were informed that next day they would be deprived of their arms and

<sup>1</sup> *Mémorial de Ste Hélène*, vol. i. pp. 66, 67.

transferred to the *Northumberland*. Cockburn's instructions provided for all eventualities. Napoleon's valuables were to be taken charge of by him, not as an act of confiscation, but to ensure that they were not made use of to effect the Emperor's escape. The interest or principal was to be applied to his needs, and at his discretion, and in the event of his death their disposal would be in accordance with his will. The Admiral was only to take on board such persons as might express their own desire to accompany the prisoner, and all such must be clearly told that they would have to submit to the rules provided to ensure Napoleon's safe custody. The Emperor was to be informed that if he attempted to escape he would incur the penalty of imprisonment, as well as any of his suite concerned in the attempt. All letters addressed to him and to his suite were to be handed in the first instance to the Admiral or the Governor, by whom they would be read before delivery, and the same with regard to letters written by Napoleon and his suite. The Admiral or Governor was instructed to transmit to the British Government any desire or representation that Napoleon might submit; nothing in that respect was left to their discretion, but the paper upon which such representations were written must remain open, so that they might be able to append any observations they might think fit.

<sup>1</sup> On the 7th of August the French party went on

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires de Ste. Hélène*, vol. i. p. 79.

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board the *Northumberland*. The Emperor's suite consisted of General Bertrand (grandiloquently styled the Grand Maréchal) and Madame Bertrand, Monsieur and Madame Montholon, General Gourgaud and the Comte de Las Cases and his son. Besides these, several servants were in attendance on Napoleon. On the 9th the vessel weighed anchor and the long voyage began.

<sup>1</sup> The Emperor maintained the same outward appearance of indifference to his fate which he had displayed on board the *Bellerophon*. He occasionally conversed with the officers, who on their part showed him a deferential courtesy. The party at dinner was composed of Napoleon and his suite, the Admiral, Captain Ross, commander of the *Northumberland*, and one or two of the other officers specially invited by the Admiral. The repast was long, although the dishes were not much in accordance with a French palate. The English custom of remaining a long time at table after the dessert to drink and chat was not at all to the liking of the Emperor, whose habit was seldom to extend his dinner beyond a quarter of an hour; and the Admiral was greatly disconcerted when Napoleon, on the very first day, retired from table immediately after coffee had been served, followed by Bertrand and Las Cases. The Admiral, however, was a good-natured man, and he took care for the future to conform to the Emperor's custom in this respect. When Napoleon quitted the

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. pp. 100, etc.

dining-room all rose and remained standing until he had reached the door, and then those who stayed behind continued to drink their wine and gossip for another hour. The Emperor then usually promenaded on the bridge until nightfall with Bertrand and Las Cases, after which all the French party gathered in the salon, and enjoyed a game of vingt-et-un, and so brought the day to a close.

It is needless to say that the captive was an object of intense interest on board—not only to the officers, but also to the crew. His name had so long been a terror to the English people that among the vulgar an imaginary “Boney” had been conjured up—a sort of bogey-man whose name was invoked to frighten naughty children in the nursery. The popular imagination had pictured him as a truculent ruffian of forbidding appearance, and when the crew beheld an agreeable gentleman, with courtly manners and refined and handsome countenance, their astonishment was unbounded. <sup>1</sup>The middies were particularly struck with his affability, and Napoleon manifested a strong interest in them. During the voyage a man fell overboard, causing a great commotion among the crew. One of the middies, seeing Las Cases hastening towards the Emperor’s cabin, seized him by the coat and exclaimed, “Ah, sir, don’t alarm him. Tell him that noise is nothing, that it is only a man in the sea.” Every evening an interesting and pleasing

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires de Ste. Hélène*, vol. i. pp. 106, 125.

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scene was witnessed. <sup>1</sup> Early each morning the sailors brought their hammocks and slung them, rolled up, to the sides of the ship, and at six in the evening, at the sound of the boatswain's whistle, they again removed them, amidst considerable bustle. At this moment five or six of the youngsters would make a circle round the Emperor, whether he was on the bridge or seated on a favourite cannon, following his movements with anxious eye, and keeping the seamen at a respectful distance. This gun, by the way, became so closely associated with Napoleon's personality that it was soon known to all on board the ship as "the Emperor's cannon."

<sup>2</sup> On the 23rd of September the *Northumberland* "crossed the line," and the usual ceremonies were observed. "Neptune" wielded his razor, and the officers themselves had to submit to his none-too-tender attentions. The French party were alone exempted from the ordeal "by special permission of the Admiral," who, up to the last moment, however, had maliciously alarmed them with the prospect of the operation in store for them. They were conducted, with every manifestation of respect, to the feet of the 'Sea God,' who deigned to bestow on each of them an appropriate compliment. The Emperor was scrupulously respected during the whole of this grotesque saturnalia, in which,

<sup>1</sup> *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, vol. i. pp. 125, 126.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 203.

as a rule, nobody is respected. In consideration of his immunity he expressed a desire to distribute a hundred napoleons among the crew, but the Admiral discounted the idea, from motives of prudence and politeness.

The rest of the voyage, which was prolonged considerably beyond the usual time by the route taken by the Admiral, passed in unvarying monotony, and it was not until the 14th of October that St. Helena was sighted, and at midday on the 15th anchor was cast, seventy days after leaving England.

<sup>1</sup> The Emperor was early on the bridge, and attentively scanned his place of exile through his glasses, without showing the slightest trace of emotion.

No preparations appeared to have been made for the reception of the exiles. The whole matter seems to have been rushed through with extreme haste, as though the British Government were afraid to allow the fallen Emperor to remain for a moment longer than was absolutely necessary off the English coast. <sup>2</sup> The Admiral had gone early on shore to arrange for the accommodation of the captives, and returned at six in the evening tired out with his exertions. He had examined every possible locality, and believed he had found something suitable; but it would require some two months to put

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires de Ste. Hélène*, vol. i. p. 256.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 257.



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the place into proper repair, and the instructions of the Ministry were precise that the prisoners should be kept on board the ship until their quarters on land were quite ready for them. The Admiral, however, assumed the responsibility of ignoring this part of his orders, and informed the captives, with manifest satisfaction, that he would take upon himself to land them on the morrow.

On the 16th of October Napoleon, with Bertrand, was accordingly conveyed to the shore. By a spontaneous impulse the whole of the ship's officers assembled on the poop, and most of the crew lined the gangways. It was not a movement of mere curiosity ; it was rather a manifestation of regard for the man who had been their guest for three months, and in whom they had become so deeply interested. Had Napoleon subsequently conducted himself with the dignity and restraint which he displayed on board the *Bellerophon* and the *Northumberland*, his life at St. Helena would have been a fairly pleasant one. Unfortunately, we shall soon see him revealing the ugly side of his character, and letting his "coltish nature break" at frequent intervals through "the gilded pale."

Before descending into the boat that was to convey him ashore, the Emperor called the Captain and took leave of him, requesting him to transmit his thanks to the officers and crew, and these gracious words made a profound impression upon all who heard them.

The rest of the Emperor's suite landed at about eight o'clock in the evening, accompanied by several of the officers, and amidst manifestations of sympathy from all those who witnessed the departure.

## CHAPTER IV

### "THE BRIARS"

<sup>1</sup>THE next morning, at six o'clock, the Emperor, Bertrand and the Admiral rode over to Longwood. On their way back they noticed a small country house, about two miles from James Town. Napoleon greatly disliked the idea of returning to his quarters of the previous night, where he had found himself even more confined than he had been on board ship. Sentries had guarded the entrance, and he had been restricted entirely to his room. A small summer-house attached to this country residence greatly took his fancy, and the Admiral agreed that it would be pleasanter there than in the town.

The valley, at the foot of which lies James Town, winds between two chains of sterile hills, which close it in. Along it runs a well-kept carriage road, which at the end of about two miles is continued on the side of the mountain, which bounds it on the left, while on the right are deep precipices and rocky ravines. Soon, however, the road ascends to a small plateau upon

<sup>1</sup> *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, vol. i. p. 280.

which stand some buildings, amidst shrubberies and copses. <sup>1</sup>It was here that Napoleon saw the house that so much pleased him, which belonged to a merchant of the island named Balcombe, and was called "The Briars."

It was a small residence for a man who had so long been accustomed to live in palaces; but after all it was better than the surroundings of his childhood, and infinitely better than Siberia or Spielberg. He had played a great game and had lost it, and it would have been well for him had he paid the stakes with dignity and resignation. As a matter of fact no man in history who has similarly fallen has been treated with such indulgence and consideration.

Here, then, the Emperor decided to stay until Longwood was ready for his reception. Las Cases bore him company, and his two valets were in attendance on him. The Balcombe family occupied that part of the house not reserved for Napoleon. The family consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Balcombe and two daughters, aged respectively fourteen and fifteen. These young ladies were a frequent source of amusement to the Emperor and greatly relieved the tedium of his sojourn. One was lively and giddy and respected nothing, the other of graver deportment but extremely artless; they often met the exile in the garden, and those interviews never failed to divert the Emperor, who was much tickled

<sup>1</sup> *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, vol. i. p. 262.

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with the naïve freedom and familiarity of their address.

It was at The Briars that Napoleon began first to exhibit those outbursts of temper to which were due in the main all the miseries of his exile. These paroxysms of fury were succeeded by fits of moroseness, and his whole conduct resembled that of a wild animal when kept in confinement. To every visitor whom he could get to listen to him he repeated his groundless charges of perfidy against the British Government, and he sent to England innumerable written protests against his detention, which he must have known could produce no practical result. <sup>1</sup> Otherwise his time was occupied in reading, dictating his memoirs to Las Cases, or spending an evening with the Balcombés, where the two young ladies and their mother joined him in a game of whist.

It is commonly supposed that Napoleon's quarrels with the authorities of St. Helena began with the advent of Sir Hudson Lowe, but this is quite a mistake. <sup>2</sup> One of his first grievances was that an officer had been placed to keep watch over him, and to accompany him when riding—and, in fact, never to lose sight of him from morning to night. It may well be imagined that this was not a congenial duty for any British officer to perform, and when Las Cases told him of the vexation of the Emperor at this constant surveillance, he replied that he would take upon himself the responsibility of

<sup>1</sup> *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, vol. i. p. 276.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* part 2, p. 62.

allowing Napoleon to ride out alone. When the Emperor was informed of this he replied that he would on no account consent to an arrangement which might compromise the officer. This proved to be a correct view of the situation, as the Admiral, on being informed of the compact, peremptorily told his subordinate to adhere strictly to his instructions. The Emperor thereupon returned the three horses which had been placed at his disposal. This episode shows the best side of Napoleon's character, and the following anecdote also displays him in a very pleasing light. <sup>1</sup> While walking one day with the Balcombes and Mrs. Stuart, a friend of theirs, a train of negro slaves was encountered, carrying heavy loads towards the town. Mrs. Balcombe harshly ordered them to stand out of the way, upon which the Emperor said reprovingly, "Madam, respect the burden." Mrs. Stuart, who had been eagerly studying the Emperor's characteristics and physiognomy, was greatly struck with the nobility of this reproof, and said in a low voice to Mrs. Balcombe, "Heavens! how different from what I have been led to believe!"

While Napoleon was thus living at The Briars, Longwood was being prepared as his permanent residence. It was a much larger house, and afforded accommodation for several of his suite who, for the present, were lodged in James Town. <sup>2</sup> The soldiers brought from England

<sup>1</sup> *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, vol. i. p. 327.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 373.

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in the *Northumberland* (belonging to the 53rd Regiment) were encamped in its vicinity, and the Colonel gave a ball, to which he invited the members of Napoleon's suite. At the Emperor's request Las Cases accepted the invitation, in order that he might see and report upon the new domicile, and he went there in a carriage drawn by six oxen, a proof of the primitive arrangements existing at that time on the island and the difficulty of the roads. Las Cases' description of the place did not favourably impress his master. <sup>1</sup> Montholon, Bertrand and Gourgaud subsequently visited it, and a heated controversy arose as to whether the smell of new paint, to which the Emperor was peculiarly sensitive, had sufficiently disappeared to make it possible for him to go there. The Admiral, however, was extremely anxious to get his charges into their permanent residence as soon as possible, and Napoleon himself was eager for the change. He found his quarters at The Briars were uncomfortable, and he was isolated from his friends; while at Longwood he would be able to receive what company he chose, or if he preferred it, to seclude himself entirely from the outer world.

<sup>2</sup> It was on the 10th of December that the removal took place. In the morning he invited Mr. Balcombe to breakfast with him, and at two in the afternoon he received a visit from the Admiral, between whom and

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. vol. i. part 2, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> *Mémoires de Ste. Hélène*, vol. i. part 2, p. 25.

the Emperor strained relations now existed. The latter resented the continual supervision exercised over him, as well as over those of his suite who were located in the town. This perverse and wrong-headed view of his relations with the island authorities was at the bottom of Napoleon's troubles. He seems entirely to have forgotten that neither the Admiral nor the Governor who succeeded him was responsible for the arrangements made for his safe custody. They were bound by their instructions, and Napoleon, as a military commander, should have remembered that an officer must obey orders, and that it is the acme of unreason to feel a personal animosity towards him who is merely the instrument of a superior authority. His resentment against the English Government was natural, though not, in view of the circumstances, justifiable, but his attitude of hostility to those whom that Government employed was not only irrational, but most impolitic, seeing how completely he was in their power. Human nature being what it is, his persistent affronts and insults, both to Cockburn and to Lowe, could not be expected to result in a relaxation of the rules laid down for their guidance.

However, on this occasion he was civil to the Admiral, who, after some conversation, accompanied him to Longwood. <sup>1</sup> It is recorded by Las Cases that during

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires de Ste. Hélène*, vol. i. part 2, p. 28.



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the ride Cockburn exerted himself to the utmost to conciliate his charge and keep him in good humour. Longwood was reached towards four in the afternoon.

## CHAPTER V

### LONGWOOD

THE house in which Napoleon was to pass the rest of his life was usually occupied by the Lieutenant-Governor of the island. As that functionary was almost always an officer of rank in the army of the East India Company, it is needless to say that it was a fairly comfortable residence. The Napoleonic fanatics, in their desire to throw dirt on the British Government, have endeavoured to describe it as practically unfit for human habitation, but this, as we have shown, is a gross misrepresentation. The fact is, when people are obsessed with Napoleon worship, they seem ready to go to all lengths in idolatry of their fetish ; and indeed those who are capable of admiring his career, which was one long negation of the elementary laws of God and man, are, as Voltaire said of the prophet Habakkuk, *capable de tout*.

Longwood is situated on a plateau in one of the highest parts of the island. From one side the Atlantic is seen stretching far away to the horizon ; on the other rugged mountains close in the view. With the

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object of increasing the comfort of Napoleon and his suite, considerable additions had been made to the house since the exiles had arrived at St. Helena. In fact, so far from the Government having thrust the Emperor into an uninhabitable hovel, every effort had been made to accommodate him, and the only substantial complaint that was urged against his new surroundings was that the odour of the fresh paint was still sufficiently strong to offend his imperial nostrils.

The household at Longwood consisted of Napoleon himself, M. and Madame de Montholon and their son, and M. de Las Cases and his son. Besides these there were the servants, of whom the Emperor had a goodly supply. Three *valets de chambre*, an usher, two grooms, a *valet de pied*, a *maître d'hôtel*, an "officier," a cook and an "argentier." Was there ever in all history a "martyr" so attended? Was there ever a prisoner of State so pampered? Had the bastilles of old France been conducted on such principles, there would have been keen competition to get into them, instead of ingenious attempts to get out. Happy would have been some of those whom Napoleon had himself incarcerated without trial, if they had had nothing to complain of but the smell of paint!

<sup>1</sup> General Gourgaud, pending the preparation of his apartment in the house, was lodged in a tent in the

<sup>1</sup> *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, vol. i. part 2, p. 34.

garden, no great hardship for a man accustomed to campaigning. "Grand Maréchal" Bertrand, his wife and his children, were installed in a house near Longwood.

It is evident that Napoleon had not much to complain of. He was surrounded by faithful friends; his wants were attended to by an army of domestics, and he had a medical man whose sole duty was to safeguard his health. Granted the necessity of restraining his capacity for mischief, nothing could have been more indulgent than the arrangements made in his regard by the British Government, acting as mandatory of the allied Powers.

<sup>1</sup> On taking up his abode at Longwood, the first thing that Napoleon undertook was the organization of his household. Various departments were distributed among the suite. Bertrand had the general superintendence of the establishment; de Montholon controlled domestic details; Gourgaud was to look after the stables, and Las Cases had the care of the furniture and fittings. The last-named office was soon relinquished by its holder, who found it clashed with that of de Montholon. <sup>2</sup> In point of fact these methodical arrangements soon proved very unsatisfactory in practice, and here we come to one of the leading causes of

<sup>1</sup> *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, vol. i. part 2, p. 36, etc.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 37.

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Napoleon's unhappiness. We have spoken of his being surrounded by faithful friends, but the inveterate tendency of Frenchmen to quarrel among themselves soon made itself apparent even at St. Helena. This defect largely accounts for the failure of France all over the world, when she has been opposed by England. Wellington's successes in Spain and Portugal were to a great extent attributable to the jealousies of the marshals, which at least on one occasion saved the Iron Duke from imminent danger. The same characteristic had been displayed in the great struggle for India ;<sup>1</sup> and the quarrels and hatred which broke out during the Moscow campaign are notorious. One would have supposed that, at all events at St. Helena, placed as they were, a small band of exiles amidst their hereditary enemies, the Frenchmen would have lived like a band of brothers. So far from this being the case, their mutual suspicion and animosity, which frequently burst out into open hostility, poisoned the Emperor's existence, and aggravated his natural irritability. They were all united in affection for him and dislike of each other. <sup>2</sup> At the very commencement of their life at Longwood Las Cases states that the allotment of the various posts gave rise to jealousies, sowing seeds of estrangement, which frequently pierced through the surface. One considered

<sup>1</sup> *Histoire de la Grande Armée*, De Segur, vol. ii. p. 126, etc.

<sup>2</sup> *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, vol. i. part 2, pp. 37, 38.

he had lost caste ; another desired to give too much importance to his duties ; while yet another considered himself slighted by the office assigned to him. " We were not," says the Count, " members of the same family, each of whom devoting himself to his own sphere, only thought of the general good. That which a sense of duty should have prompted us to do, we were far from performing in practice ; we spent our time in cavilling over the absence of some luxury, or the vanished hopes of some ambition. We formed at Longwood a mass held together rather by enclosure than by cohesion. This was inevitable, for we were almost entire strangers to each other ; and, unfortunately, not at all calculated to harmonize, either by circumstances, age, or dispositions."

This not only destroyed that mutual confidence and intimate union which can alleviate the hardships of the most cruel misfortunes, but it made the Emperor's position extremely unpleasant. It forced him frequently to make indirect appeals for brotherly love among his troublesome associates ; <sup>1</sup> it was a continual strain upon him to remove all causes of jealousy, and he was compelled occasionally to go further and openly reprove his followers for their unworthy bickerings. On one of these occasions, he pointed out the vexatious folly of their conduct in the circumstances in which they

<sup>1</sup> *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, vol. ii. part 3, p. 49.

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were placed. They should make mutual sacrifices, and not attach too much importance to trifling inconveniences. They were to endeavour to be one family. They had come there voluntarily to mitigate the sorrow of his banishment, and their quarrels only aggravated it. Differences were inevitable, but they should be settled by mutual explanations and not by sulking, and much more to the same effect.

These quarrels reached a climax later on, when a challenge to mortal combat was exchanged between two of the suite. <sup>1</sup> When this came to the knowledge of the Emperor he was furious, and when all were assembled around the dinner-table he expressed his displeasure and irritation in the strongest language. "You have accompanied me here," said he, "to make yourselves agreeable to me. Act like brothers, otherwise you are simply a nuisance. You wish to make me happy—act like brothers then, otherwise you are only a torment. You talk of fighting, under my very eyes! am I then no longer the object of your consideration? Remember that the eyes of the foreigner are upon us. I want every one here to be actuated by my spirit; I want you all to be happy around me, and that each should enjoy to the utmost the few pleasures that remain to us." This outburst only ended with the repast, after which the Emperor relapsed into a moody silence, as well he might.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 95.

Worried in this way by the misconduct of his friends, Napoleon became more and more restive under his banishment; and he brooded over the restrictions which, in the circumstances, were unavoidable. <sup>1</sup> One of the main causes of his resentment was the regulation which compelled him to be accompanied by a British officer whenever he took exercise on horseback. This was a continual reminder to him of the unfortunate situation into which he had brought himself by his long career of violence and lawlessness. The officer charged with this unpleasant duty endeavoured to discharge it with the utmost regard for the Emperor's feelings, and the exile would have been better advised had he accepted the situation without complaint. The company of an English gentleman was, after all, not such a very onerous burden to bear; and one would have thought that it might have proved a pleasant relief from the cantankerous and quarrelsome coterie with which he was surrounded. He not only resented the presence of this officer, however, but visited it with personal hatred upon the Admiral, and subsequently on the Governor. As one who had not been accustomed to brook disobedience to his orders, he should have remembered that the authorities at St. Helena were only carrying out explicit instructions from the Government they served, and that it was not only impolitic, but quite unreasonable, to

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires de Ste. Hélène*, vol. i. part 2, p. 111, etc.



cherish personal animosity towards them. His behaviour in this respect shows a littleness of character which proves that, like most other men dubbed with the epithet of "great," he had little real claim to the distinction. However, so irritated was he by this regulation, that he expressed his determination to forego horse exercise altogether rather than submit to it. He thus manufactured another so-called "indignity" for European consumption.

Another and much more substantial grievance was also of a sentimental character. This was the order issued by the British Government that Napoleon should be addressed as "General Bonaparte" and not as "Emperor." Here, it must be admitted, the allied Powers went beyond the necessities of the case. To make provision for his safe custody, and take every precaution against his escape, was one thing ; to deny him the title by which he had been recognized for eleven years, which had been ratified by the votes of the French people, and under which the Powers had sent him ambassadors, and concluded treaties with him, was quite another matter. As Emperor of the French he had allied himself in marriage with the proudest and most ancient dynasty in Europe ; kings had vied with each other to secure his protection, and had not only recognized his imperial dignity, but also the kings which he had created.

This order was based on a fiction. When Louis

XVIII ascended the French throne, he pretended that he had occupied it from the death of the Dauphin, ostrich-like ignoring the Republic, the Directory, the Consulate, and the Empire. This was all very well for the fanatics who clung to the effete superstition of "the right divine of kings to govern wrong," but it was an impossible attitude for the allied Powers to assume. They, at all events, had recognized accomplished facts, and had troubled themselves not at all about the legitimist pretensions of the exiled Bourbons. It was rather paltry thus to insult the man before whom they had been cowering for years past. But here again, the Emperor should have remembered that his guardians were not personally responsible for the decree. It was the British Government, acting in concert with the other Powers, and supported by the Tory majority in Parliament, who were to blame, and it was as unjust as it was impolitic for Napoleon to visit it upon the heads of those in whose custody he was placed. But we shall presently see that this attitude of the Emperor was part of a settled policy to enable him to pose as a martyr before the eyes of the world.

## CHAPTER VI

### NAPOLEON'S RELATIONS WITH ADMIRAL COCKBURN

AS we have already said, Napoleon's quarrel with those set over him began long before the appearance of Sir Hudson Lowe upon the scene. To saddle the Governor, therefore, with responsibility for these quarrels is utterly unjust. Floods of obloquy have been poured out on the devoted head of Lowe for his alleged barbarity to his prisoner, but nothing is ever said about the friction which existed between that unmanageable person and the Admiral. It is nevertheless certain that Napoleon hated the sailor with an intensity that was only exceeded and eclipsed by his subsequent hatred of the soldier; and as the latter was in authority for years and the former for months, the opportunities afforded for quarrelling were much greater in the one case than in the other. The fact is that whoever had been delegated to look after him would have incurred Napoleon's hatred. Had the archangel Gabriel been appointed Governor of St. Helena, Napoleon would have fitted him with cloven hoofs and all the other attributes of the devil. He would

only have seen in him the incarnation and embodiment of England, the nation he had devoted his life to crushing, and which had finally crushed him.

<sup>1</sup> The Right Hon. Sir George Cockburn, Admiral of the Fleet, was born in 1772, the son of Sir James Cockburn, Bart., and entered the Navy at the age of nine. He became lieutenant in 1793, and was promoted shortly afterwards to the command of the sloop *Speedy*. In 1794 he became post-captain on the *Meleager* frigate, and was employed in the Gulf of Genoa, under the immediate orders of Nelson, whose friendship he enjoyed. In 1796 Cockburn was transferred to the frigate *Minerve*, one of England's innumerable captures from the French, on which Nelson hoisted his broad pennant. After taking several important prizes, the *Minerve* ran through the Spanish fleet and joined that of Sir John Jervis the day before the battle of Cape St. Vincent. The *Minerve* afterwards continued in the Mediterranean till the peace, capturing numerous prizes, and then returning to England, was paid off in February, 1802.

In July, 1803, Cockburn was appointed to the *Phaeton*, in which he spent the next two years in the East Indies. In 1806 he went to the *Pompée*, and took an important part in the reduction of Martinique. His next ship was the *Belle-Isle*, in which he brought back to Europe the prizes and garrison captured at Martinique. The

<sup>1</sup> *Dictionary of National Biography*.

latter were first taken to Quiberon Bay for exchange, but being unable to arrange matters with the French authorities, Cockburn carried the prisoners to Portsmouth. He afterwards commanded the flotilla of gunboats in the reduction of Flushing, and covered the retreat of the British Army when it withdrew from the Scheldt. He was next appointed to the *Indefatigable*, and was sent to Quiberon Bay to land two agents who had undertaken to effect the escape of the King of Spain, whom Napoleon, with the basest treachery, had immured in the castle of Valengay. The men were speedily arrested, however, and Cockburn returned to England. He was sent to Cadiz, then (1810) besieged by the French, where he again rendered important services. He subsequently distinguished himself at Havana, and in 1811 was appointed commissioner to mediate between Spain and her South American colonies, but without success. On the 12th of August, 1811, he was raised to the rank of Rear-Admiral, and hoisting his flag on the *Marlborough*, took command of the squadron before Cadiz. The war with the United States, however, sent him to the Bermudas, whence he sailed to attack the enemy in the Chesapeake, upon whom he inflicted considerable damage. He took part in the brilliant affair of Bladensburg, where Major-General Ross so greatly distinguished himself, and acquired the right of taking the name of Ross of Bladensburg. The British force captured Washington, and retired

unmolested, after destroying the Government stores. Cockburn was the life and soul of this expedition, and Ross of Bladensburg, in reporting its success, generously recognized the Admiral's services. He was with Ross when that gallant officer received his death-wound, during the advance on Baltimore. In 1815 he was ordered to hoist his flag on the *Northumberland*, and to convey Napoleon to St. Helena. Having landed his prisoner, he remained on the island as Governor pending the arrival of Sir Hudson Lowe, and found the position as irksome as his successor afterwards found it, owing to the imperative necessity of unceasing vigilance in watching over his cunning and unscrupulous charge. He was relieved in 1816, and arrived in England on the 1st of August. The dignity of G.C.B. was conferred upon him in 1818; he became Vice-Admiral in 1819, and was appointed commander-in-chief of the North American and West Indian station in 1832, having in the interval been unemployed. His return to England in 1836 saw the close of his active career at sea, but he was created Admiral of the Fleet in 1851. He was First Naval Lord of the Admiralty, 1841-6, and at different times had represented three several constituencies in Parliament, besides having been made a Privy Councillor in 1827. In 1852 he succeeded to the baronetcy, and died in 1853, leaving only one daughter. In default of male issue, the title passed to his brother William, Dean of York.

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It will be seen that Cockburn was as distinguished as a naval officer as we shall presently show Lowe to have been in the sister service, and it is significant that Napoleon vented his spleen on both, which shows clearly enough where the fault lay.

Shortly after his arrival at St. Helena the Emperor was at loggerheads with the Admiral. Besides the grievance of being attended while on horseback, complaint was made against the posting of sentries under his windows, and at the doors. Free communication with the residents on the island was discountenanced on the ground that the Emperor should not be harassed by undesired attentions. Napoleon, extremely irritated by these restrictions, instructed de Montholon to embody his complaints in a letter to the Admiral. The reply was not at all calculated to improve the relations between guardian and prisoner: it was to the effect that there was no such person as an Emperor recognized in St. Helena; and that the justice and moderation of the British Government with regard to the exiles would be the admiration of future ages. This reply, sent by Dr. O'Meara, was supplemented by a verbal inquiry as to whether the Emperor desired to be supplied with the libels and scurrilous anonymous letters which the Admiral had received on his behalf.

<sup>1</sup> On the 13th of March, 1816, the "Grand Maréchal" wrote to Cockburn, by Napoleon's instructions, to ask

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires de Ste. Hélène*, vol. i. part 2, p. 338.

whether a letter he proposed to indite to the Prince Regent would be forwarded. After commencing with a repetition of the formula that no such person as an Emperor was known in St. Helena, the Admiral replied that the letter to the Prince would certainly be transmitted, but in accordance with the orders regulating correspondence, only on condition that it was left open. The Emperor contended that this particular communication was not on all-fours with the ordinary correspondence of himself and his suite, and bitterly resented the proviso as a personal affront. The episode greatly widened the breach which already existed between himself and Cockburn, and matters were not improved by Bertrand's rejoinder that the Admiral had either exceeded or misinterpreted his instructions; that his answer was therefore looked upon as a deliberate personal insult, and that the Emperor considered the condition beneath his dignity and that of the Prince Regent to accept, and would therefore abandon the idea of writing. The Admiral, however, had neither exceeded nor misinterpreted his instructions—he had merely fulfilled them. Lord Bathurst's despatch is quite clear as to this:—"Whatever he (Napoleon) or they (the suite) think fit to address, either directly to the Prince Regent, or to me or to any member of His Majesty's Government, your Excellency is aware must be transmitted home *provided it has been previously submitted to your perusal. In this particular you are left without any discretion.*



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Your knowledge of the contents affords you an opportunity of immediately vindicating yourself if the letter should contain any charges against you, and assuring that whatever complaints they may make must be laid before the Prince Regent."

Thenceforth the Emperor and the Admiral saw little of each other, and Cockburn must have felt inexpressibly relieved when the time drew near for the new Governor's appearance. The duty of acting as custodian of Napoleon was a highly responsible and very unpleasant one, and to a sailor it must have been exceptionally distasteful.

On the 14th of April, 1816, Sir Hudson Lowe arrived, and as this brings us to the main epoch of our narrative, we will, before entering upon it, deal with what remains of Cockburn's connection with Napoleon.

<sup>1</sup> He accompanied the new Governor on his first visit to Longwood, which took place on the 16th of April. The Emperor refused to receive him, pleading illness, and it was not until next day that the interview took place. By a stupid and malicious blunder of the valet, when the Admiral was about to follow Lowe into the reception-room, the door was shut in his face, and, naturally disconcerted, he retired into the window-recess.

<sup>2</sup> The Emperor, on being informed of the contretemps, denied that it had happened with his knowledge, but none the less manifested great delight that it should

<sup>1</sup> *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, vol. ii. p. 45, etc.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 54.

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have occurred, and warmly commended the valet for his action. He added that it was fortunate for the Admiral that he had thus been shut out, for he had intended to have charged him before all his compatriots with having degraded his Government, his Nation and his Sovereign before one of the oldest soldiers in Europe. He would have accused the Admiral of having landed him at St. Helena like a convict at Botany Bay, and would have told him that, as a true man of honour, he, the Emperor, had become more worthy of veneration on this rock than when seated on his throne or surrounded by his armies—a piece of gasconading which at once indicates the colossal vanity of the speaker and his deep hatred of the Admiral.

<sup>1</sup> It will be as well to give Sir Hudson's own account of this first interview, as it is, of course, more complete and reliable than that given by Las Cases. As to the subsequent interviews between the Governor and Napoleon, it will be sufficient to describe them in the words of the Emperor himself, as recorded by Las Cases. Such evidence may be accepted as placing the conduct of the Governor in the very worst light, and that of Napoleon in the best, and if it triumphantly vindicates Sir Hudson, as we submit it does, then his acquittal of the charges brought against him follows as a matter of course.

The Governor was received by Bertrand in the

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, Forsyth, vol. i. p. 139, etc.

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Emperor's dining-room, which served as antechamber, and was instantly after asked into an inner room, where he found Napoleon standing with his hat in his hand. As he remained silent, Sir Hudson said, "I am come, sir, to present my respects to you." "You speak French, sir, I perceive," observed the Emperor, "but I understand that you also speak Italian. You once commanded a regiment of Corsicans." The Governor replied that both languages were alike to him. "We will speak, then, in Italian," returned the other; and at once commenced a conversation which lasted about half an hour. Napoleon asked the Governor where he had served, and how he liked the Corsicans. "They carry the stiletto; are they not a bad people?" he observed, looking at Lowe very significantly for an answer. The Governor replied that they did not carry the stiletto, having abandoned the custom in the British service; they had always conducted themselves with propriety, and he was very well satisfied with them. Napoleon then asked him if he had not been in Egypt with them, and on the Governor replying in the affirmative, entered into a long discussion respecting that country, saying that Menou was a weak man, and that if Kleber had been there the British would have been all made prisoners. He then passed in review all the British operations in Egypt, showing he was thoroughly acquainted with them, and finished with the remark, "In war the game is always with him who commits the

fewest blunders." He asked Lowe if he was married ; and how he liked St. Helena. The Governor replied that he had not been long enough in the island to form an opinion. Napoleon then asked him how many years he had been in the service, to which Lowe replied twenty-eight. "Then," observed the Emperor, "I am an older soldier than you." "Of whom history," gracefully responded the Governor, "will make mention in a very different manner." Napoleon smiled, but said nothing.

It will be seen that Sir Hudson laid himself out to be agreeable to the exile, who, on his side, said and did nothing of a hostile character. It would have been well had the Emperor maintained this attitude, but unhappily his behaviour at subsequent interviews was in painful contrast to his urbane speech and dignified deportment on this occasion.

It has been necessary to describe the relations which existed between Cockburn and Napoleon in order to show that, as was afterwards admitted by Montholon and Gourgaud, whoever had been in command at St. Helena must inevitably have incurred the Emperor's hatred. The Napoleonic myth is two-sided ; it involves a blind and credulous belief in the idol, and a malignant determination to libel and malign any who came athwart his path. He himself pursued this plan of calumny against his opponents. Moreau, Pichegru, Bourrienne—all in fact who incurred his animosity, were traduced

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by him or his creatures. But the Napoleonic fanatics have concentrated all their venom upon the devoted head of Sir Hudson Lowe. It is time that a protest should be uttered against this monstrous injustice, and that the character should be vindicated of a distinguished and gallant officer, who, in circumstances of great difficulty and responsibility, faithfully performed the duty committed to his charge.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE NEW GOVERNOR

**L**IEUTENANT-GENERAL SIR HUDSON LOWE was born on the 28th of July, 1769, the same year in which his captive first saw the light, and was consequently in his forty-eighth year when he assumed the governorship of St. Helena. He was the son of Hudson Lowe, an army surgeon, and his wife, the daughter of J. Morgan, of Galway. He joined the East Devon Militia at an early age, and served as a volunteer with the 50th Foot at Gibraltar in 1785-6; was gazetted ensign in that regiment on the 25th of September, 1787, and passed to the rank of lieutenant and captain, reaching the latter grade on the 25th of September, 1795. After doing service at Gibraltar, he travelled through Italy, acquiring an intimate knowledge of French and Italian; and, rejoining his regiment at Gibraltar on the outbreak of the war, was with it at Toulon and in Corsica, taking part in the sieges of Bastia and Calvi. He was afterwards for two years in garrison at Ajaccio, and thence went to Elba, where he was deputy judge-

<sup>1</sup> *Dictionary of National Biography.*

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advocate. His next move was to Portugal, where he remained for two years, and acquired proficiency in the language, having previously obtained a good knowledge of Spanish. From Lisbon he went to Minorca, where he was made one of the inspectors of foreign corps, and put in command of two hundred Corsican emigrants, styled the Corsican Rangers. His task in training these wild men was difficult, but he succeeded in drilling them into a high state of efficiency. Lowe commanded the corps in Egypt in 1801 at the landing, and in the operations before Alexandria and the advance on Cairo, and repeatedly won the approval of Sir John Moore, who remarked on one occasion, "When Lowe's at the outposts I'm sure of a good night." For his services in Egypt he received the Turkish gold medal. At the peace of Amiens the Corsican Rangers were disbanded, and Lowe went on half-pay; but an officer with such a record could not long be dispensed with, and we accordingly find him shortly afterwards appointed Major in the 7th Royal Fusiliers.

In 1803 Lowe, on the recommendation of Sir John Moore, was appointed one of the new permanent assistants in the quartermaster-general's department at Plymouth, whence, in July, he was despatched to Portugal on a military mission. He inspected the troops and defences on the north and north-eastern frontiers, and reported the practicability of defending the country with a mixed British and Portuguese force,

thus preparing the way for Wellington's subsequent operations, and contributing to the success of the Peninsular War, destined afterwards to begin the downfall of his future prisoner. We next find him at Malta, whither he was sent to revive his corps of Corsican Rangers on a larger scale, of which he was appointed Lieutenant-Colonel commandant. He was sent on a mission to Sardinia, and by his report on the state of the island saved a proposed subsidy. He next went with his corps to Naples, under Sir James Craig, in 1805, and commanded the advance during the movement from Castellamare towards the Abruzzi. When the British retired to Sicily, Lowe was detached to Capri with part of his corps. The rest proceeded to Calabria and did good service at Maida, a battle which, though the numbers engaged on each side were small, is important as the first in which the French broke and fled before British bayonets. The Corsican Rangers were then reunited under Lowe at Capri, where, on his own responsibility, he humanely appealed to Berthier, chief of the staff of the army of Naples, against the frequent French military executions of Calabrian refugees. From June, 1806, to October, 1808, he occupied Capri, when, after bravely sustaining a siege of thirteen days, he was obliged to consent to an honourable surrender of the island to General Lamarque, marching out with the survivors of the garrison, and the arms and baggage. Lowe's conduct appears to have been fully approved by



officers well acquainted with the circumstances. Lowe afterwards held important commands in Naples, and the Ionian Islands, where he was second in command, and was entrusted with the provisional government of Cephalonia, Ithaca and Santa Maura, which he framed and administered without remuneration for two years. He addressed a general report on the Ionian Islands to the Colonial Office, and, on leaving, the inhabitants presented him with a sword of honour.

After being promoted Colonel of the Royal Corsican Rangers, he returned to England in 1812, never having been absent from his duty a single day since the beginning of the war in 1793, and having been in England only six months during the whole of that period.

In 1813 Lowe was sent on a mission to Sweden to secure the adhesion of the Crown Prince Bernadotte to the allies, whence he repaired to the Czar's head-quarters at Kalisch. He was present at the battle of Bautzen, where he first saw Napoleon, and at Würschen, and remained with the allied armies until the armistice of June, 1813. He was then sent to inspect the various levies in British pay in North Germany, of about 20,000 men. Thence he went to the head-quarters of Bernadotte, and afterwards to those of Blücher, being present at the battles of Möckern and Leipzig, and accompanying the pursuit of the routed French to the Rhine. After being employed on other duties, he rejoined Blücher at Vaucouleurs, and was present with the Prussians at no

less than thirteen general engagements. The confidence reposed in him was shown by his being frequently consulted, especially at the conference at Châtillon, and he there strongly advocated the advance on Paris, which had such triumphant results. He was the first officer to bring to England the news of the fall of Paris, having ridden from Paris to Calais attended only by a single Cossack. Lowe was knighted on the 26th of April, and raised to the rank of Major-General on the 4th of June, 1814. He also received the Russian Cross of St. George, and the Prussian order of military merit. On the allies withdrawing from France, he was made Quartermaster-General of the army in the Low Countries, under the Prince of Orange. On the escape of Napoleon from Elba, Lowe, with the sanction of the Prince, urged the Prussian commanders to concentrate on the Meuse, to co-operate in the defence of Belgium. When Wellington took command of the Anglo-Belgian army, Lowe remained for a few weeks under him as his quartermaster-general, but was then appointed to command the troops at Genoa. In July, 1815, he occupied Marseilles, and marching on Toulon, drove out General Brune, and compelled the fortress to hoist the Bourbon flag.

It was while at Marseilles that Lowe received the intimation that he would have the custody of Napoleon, then on board the *Bellerophon*. On leaving Marseilles, Sir Hudson was presented by the inhabitants with

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a silver urn as a token of gratitude for his having saved the city from pillage—the second time in his life that a grateful population had so distinguished him. He was appointed Governor of St. Helena by the Court of Directors of the East India Company at a salary of £12,000 a year. His instructions were to permit every indulgence to Napoleon *compatible with the entire security of his person*. The new Governor received the local rank of Lieutenant-General, and on the 4th of January, 1816, was made K.C.B., and sailed for the island in the middle of that month, accompanied by his wife, whom he had recently married, his stepdaughters and a numerous staff, and arrived, as we have seen, on the 14th of April.

We have now brought this biographical sketch down to the date upon which he first came in personal contact with Napoleon, and have now only to deal with the relations which existed between him and his prisoner. It may be as well, however, to give a brief résumé of his subsequent career.

On the Emperor's death (5th of May, 1821), Lowe quitted St. Helena. For the third time he was honoured with an address from those over whom he had been placed. In this document the inhabitants testified to the justice and moderation of his rule, and the confidence felt in him, as evinced by the unanimous acceptance of his measures for the abolition of slavery (without compensation), which took effect from Christmas Day.

1818, and his services in this regard were very warmly acknowledged by Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton in the House of Commons. He was cordially received by the King, and Lord Bathurst, by command, expressed approbation of his conduct at St. Helena. He received the first vacant colonelcy, that of the 93rd Highlanders, on the 4th of June, 1822.

Then the flood-gates of libel and scurrility were opened upon him. Moore defamed him in verse and O'Meara, Napoleon's medical attendant, in prose. <sup>1</sup>*The Quarterly Review* exposed O'Meara's slanders and proved him to have been guilty of the grossest contradictions. Party politics in England at that time ran very high, and the Whig Opposition made use of the occasion to assail the Tories, under cover of the man who had, as they alleged, persecuted their idol. For strange as it may seem to us, Napoleon had become the figure-head of European Liberalism, after having spent his public life in suppressing liberty; and that "Napoleonic Legend" arose, which exists with weed-like pertinacity even to this day, and has been mainly responsible for one of the bloodiest wars of modern times, which cost France two of her fairest provinces. The Tory Ministry had sent Napoleon to St. Helena, so the Whigs took him under their protection, and made him the stalking horse for their factious and unpatriotic attacks on their political opponents. Lowe brought an

<sup>1</sup> *Quarterly Review*, No. 55, October, 1822, art. xiii.

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action against O'Meara, which failed on a technicality. He was badly treated by the Government which he had served so well, and his resources were much crippled by his attempts at legal redress. At last, in 1832, Toryism received a smashing blow in the great Reform Bill. Lowe's inveterate enemies, the Whigs, came into power, and the rest of his life was embittered by fruitless efforts to obtain justice. These vexations were mitigated by his appointment to the colonelcy of his old regiment, the 50th, and his advancement to the highest class of the Prussian Order of the Red Eagle, which was accompanied by a highly flattering letter from von Bülow, recalling his "signal services to the common cause in the glorious campaigns of 1813-14." He was also made a G.C.M.G.

Lowe died of paralysis in comparative poverty, on the 10th of January, 1844, a melancholy example of merit ill-requited, of party hate, and of cruel and relentless persecution.

Against the malignant slanders of Lowe by Napoleonic partisans it is well to set the testimony of impartial and disinterested observers. Amongst these is Mr. Walter Henry, the Assistant Surgeon of the 66th Regiment, who was stationed at St. Helena from 1817 to 1821, and thus had ample opportunity of forming a just opinion of Sir Hudson's character. In his *Events of a Military Life*, Henry says : <sup>1</sup> " From first impressions I

<sup>1</sup> *Events of a Military Life*, Henry, vol. ii. p. 9.

entertained an opinion of him far from favourable ; if, therefore, notwithstanding this prepossession, my testimony should incline to the other side, I can truly state that the change took place from the weight of evidence, and in consequence of what came under my own observation in St. Helena."

In the same work Henry quotes the following from a letter received by him from a brother officer : <sup>1</sup> " Few persons, if any, are better acquainted with Sir Hudson Lowe than myself. When he was Quartermaster-General in the Netherlands in 1814-15, I was Deputy Assistant in the department, when I was with him every day. I also saw him when certain circumstances gave him much annoyance, but cannot recollect any single instance of his breaking out into any unseemly bursts of anger, or showing real uncourteousness. He was very much liked by all who served under him ; being at all times kind, considerate, generous and hospitable."

After attributing to the calumnies of O'Meara a mistaken remark which he had made as to the Governor's temper, and which had been noted by his correspondent, Henry adds : " The author (that is himself) can testify that during four years' acquaintance with Sir Hudson Lowe, in the course of which he was occasionally professionally resident in his house, the demeanour of this much-injured man was always gentlemanly and courteous, both to himself and all around him."

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. pp. 59, 60.

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By her marriage with her first husband, Lady Lowe had two daughters, and by Sir Hudson two sons and a daughter, all three born in St. Helena. His younger son, Edward William Howe de Lancy, followed the career of his gallant and distinguished father, and rose to the rank of Major-General. He fought in the Sikh War of 1848-9, and afterwards showed conspicuous heroism during the defence of the Lucknow Residency in 1857, in the course of which he was severely wounded. In the consequent operations against the Sepoy mutineers he more than sustained his reputation as an able and gallant officer, and was thanked in despatches, besides being made a C.B.

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## CHAPTER VIII

“LOOK HERE UPON THIS PICTURE, AND ON THIS”

SUCH was the man upon whom a torrent of the foulest calumny has been poured out by those who have fallen down and worshipped at the shrine of the Imperial Moloch. To the discredit of our name, Englishmen have been among the most virulent of his traducers. We are asked to believe that a man who distinguished himself throughout his whole career as a brave and gallant officer ; who protested in the name of humanity against the atrocious butcheries committed by the French in Calabria ; who was thrice presented with addresses of gratitude by communities committed to his charge, and who was knighted by his grateful Sovereign for eminent services—that this man, on arriving at St. Helena, became suddenly divested of all the fine attributes which had previously distinguished him, and was transformed, as if by the wave of a malignant magician’s wand, into an incarnation of brutality ; a fiend whose sole delight was to torment the defenceless captive he held at his mercy, and who employed his talents in devising fresh insults and tortures for his victim. On



the face of it the thing is incredible. We shall presently show that it was absolutely untrue in fact, and we shall call as a witness, not an enemy of Napoleon, but one of his most blind and credulous admirers ; no other, in fact, than the Count de Las Cases himself. This is the most powerful evidence of all, for, as Burke said,<sup>1</sup> " History will examine with great strictness of scrutiny whatever appears from a writer in favour of his own cause. On the other hand, whatever escapes him, and makes against that cause, comes with the greatest weight."

We shall prove out of the mouth of this witness that the provocations and insults came from the exile himself ; that Lowe was the " Martyr of St. Helena " and not Napoleon ; that there was a deliberate conspiracy, begun under Admiral Cockburn and continued with increased malignancy under Sir Hudson Lowe, to delude the world into the belief that having commenced by treacherously entrapping Napoleon into a surrender, England consummated her infamy by selecting as her instrument a base, cowardly and callous bully, who revelled in the opportunity afforded him to gratify the vile instincts of his depraved nature.

The Staff Officer constantly on duty about Longwood, after speaking of the reliance placed by the exiles on party sympathy in England, says that the policy of

<sup>1</sup> Preface to *M. Brissot's Address to his Constituents*. Burke's Works, Ed. 1803, vol. vii. p. 298.

Longwood—heartily and assiduously carried out by Napoleon’s adherents—was to pour into England pamphlets and letters, complaining of unnecessary restrictions, insults from the Governor, scarcity of provisions, miserable accommodation, insalubrity of climate, and a host of other grievances, but chiefly levelled at the Governor, as the head and front of all that was amiss.

The evidence of this settled purpose is not, however, limited to English witnesses. Lamartine, in his *History of the Restoration of Monarchy in France*, says: <sup>1</sup> “On reading attentively the correspondence and notes exchanged, under every pretext, between the adherents of Napoleon and Sir Hudson Lowe, we are astonished at the insults, the provocations, and the invectives with which the captive and his friends outraged the Governor at every turn. . . . The desire of provoking insults by insults, then to represent those insults as crimes to the indignation of the Continent, and to make of Sir Hudson Lowe the Pilate of this Napoleonic calvary, is evident in all these notes.”

The absurdity of the fiction of Napoleon’s wrongs and “martyrdom” is exposed by the facts of his career, apart from any other evidence. We are seriously asked to believe that he was the victim of injustice and cruelty

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Restoration of Monarchy in France*, A. de Lamartine, Book 38, sec. 37, p. 550. London: Vizetelly & Co., 1852.

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on the part of the Allied Powers. That throughout his whole public life he had been longing for peace, and had only been driven into war, much against his will, by their diabolical machinations. That he had abdicated finally from the purest patriotic motives, and had voluntarily abandoned public life from the lofty desire to sacrifice himself to the hatred of his enemies for the sake of France; and that he had come to St. Helena in a spirit of pious and patriotic resignation, prepared to bow with dignity to the inexorable decree of Fate, and to show that he was "the most docile and tranquil man in the world."

Let us see how the facts of Napoleon's career fit in with this pretty fairy tale.

He commenced as a Jacobin, the associate of Robespierre's brother, and an ally of the Terrorists. When Thermidor settled that gang of miscreants, he ruthlessly suppressed the rising of the Sections of Paris on the day of Vendemiaire and thereby sprang into sudden notoriety. His advancement was furthered by his marriage with Josephine Beauharnais, who was requited by a cruel and callous divorce when she was no longer of use to him. He upset the Directory by the *coup d'état* of Brumaire, which would have been a ghastly failure but for the ready wit of his brother Lucien. <sup>1</sup> He showed his gratitude to that brother by a long and cruel persecution, solely for the reason that Lucien, to his eternal honour,

<sup>1</sup> *Napoleon's Brothers*, A. H. Atteridge, p. 100, etc.

absolutely refused to divorce his beautiful, accomplished and devoted wife *à la* Josephine in order that he might ally himself with some gross German princess. <sup>1</sup> He treated another of his brothers, Louis, with the grossest indignity simply because, as King of Holland, he refused to ruin the Dutch people to gratify the despot's hate of England. He made war like a Calabrian brigand, and turned Paris into a receiving-house for the stolen goods of Europe. His proclamation to the army of Italy gives the key to his method of warfare. Here it is.

<sup>2</sup> “Soldiers! You are naked and hungry; your pay is in arrear and the military chest is empty. Your patience and the courage you display amidst these mountains are admirable, but they bring you no glory. I am about to lead you into the most fertile plains in the world. Rich provinces, great cities, will be in your power, and there you will possess wealth, honour and glory. Soldiers of Italy! Will your courage fail you?”

He seized and held captive the Head of the Catholic Church, and then complained of his own captivity at St. Helena. In defiance of the most elementary principles of international law, and in contravention of all law, human and divine, he forcibly abducted the Duc d'Eng-hien, and after a trial which was a mockery of justice, caused him to be barbarously murdered in the bastille of

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 182, etc.

<sup>2</sup> *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, vol. i. part 2, p. 199.

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Vincennes. He shot in cold blood several thousand prisoners on the beach at Jaffa, after they had made a conditional surrender. He pursued with relentless malignity all who thwarted his unbridled ambition. He drove the victor of Hohenlinden into exile, and there is grave suspicion that he caused Pichegru to be murdered in the prison into which he had thrust him. He adopted a consistent course of duplicity and treachery whenever it suited his purpose to do so, and the most flagrant example of this is to be found in his treatment of Spain and Portugal. <sup>1</sup> The following letter of instructions which he wrote to Junot in the latter country is sufficient proof of this.

“ To General Clarke, Minister for War.

FONTAINEBLEAU,

28th of October, 1807.

“ General Junot is to listen to every proposal, but he is to sign nothing, having no authority to do so from the Department of Foreign Affairs. He must refer everything to my Ambassador at Madrid, and must keep you exactly informed of all overtures made to him.

“ I desire my troops shall arrive at Lisbon as soon as possible, to seize all English merchandise. I desire they shall, if possible, go there as friends in order to take possession of the Portuguese fleet.

<sup>1</sup> *New Letters of Napoleon*, Lady Mary Floyd, pp. 53–55.

"The Portuguese Government will take one of the two following measures.

"Either (1) on seeing the French Army approach, it will march forward its own troops, and stand on the defensive. Then everything falls into the military province. . . .

"Or (2) the Portuguese Government will make up its mind to submit, will declare war with England, and will send messengers to meet the Army and negotiate. In this case, General Junot must speak in the following terms :—

"My sovereign's orders are that I am not to delay one day in marching upon Lisbon. My mission is to close that great port to the English. I ought to use force against you, but as the shedding of blood is repugnant to the noble heart of the Emperor Napoleon and to the character of the French people, I have orders—if you agree not to keep your troops massed together; if you place them in positions where they cannot cause any anxiety, and if you will receive as auxiliaries, until the negotiations begun at Paris are concluded—to consent to that arrangement."

"By these means General Junot may contrive to get to Lisbon as an auxiliary. The date of his arrival will be calculated here to a couple of days, and twenty-four hours later, a courier will be sent to inform him that the Portuguese proposals have not been accepted,

and that he is to treat the country as that of an enemy. Eight or ten ships of war and those dockyards would be an immense advantage to us. All General Junot's discourse, then, must be directed to the execution of this great plan. There is reason to think he will succeed, because it is not likely that Portugal will dare to resist. . . .

"General Junot's operation will be a real success, if by dint of prudence and wise use of his tongue, he makes himself master of the Portuguese fleet. He must make use of his nomination to convey the impression that he has been sent to smooth down everything.

"He may say anything he pleases, so long as he gets hold of the Portuguese fleet."

Now, we ask any impartial reader of the above to say whether in the whole annals of cold-blooded treachery and fraud anything worse has ever been recorded. It is the application to practical politics of the prayer in *The Critic*: "Assist us to accomplish all our ends, and sanctify whatever means we use to gain them." There is no example of Indian duplicity which exceeds in turpitude the diabolical plot disclosed in these "instructions." And the man who conceived it dared to reproach England for her "perfidy!"

He not only plundered every country that he overran, but perpetrated the most cruel outrages on the populations. <sup>1</sup> In his Moscow campaign he lit up the country

<sup>1</sup> *Rélation Circonstanciée de la Campagne de Russie en 1812*, E. Labaume.

with the flames of burning villages, and covered it with the mutilated remains of murdered men, outraged women and slaughtered children. His Marshals in Spain were equal to himself in such abominations. They robbed the churches of the sacred vessels, cut priceless works of art from their frames, and were decamping with the loot, when Wellington routed them at Vittoria and recovered it.

Here then are the two men, as they stand at the bar of History. The one a humane and gallant officer, of unblemished reputation, who had faithfully served his king and country throughout the whole course of an honourable career. The other a wily, unscrupulous despot, a sort of combination of Macchiavelli and Attila, who had “waded through slaughter to a throne, and shut the gates of mercy on mankind”; whose restless and insatiable ambition had plunged Europe into a sea of blood for twenty years; who hesitated at no crime to further his objects, and who, having lived to be a curse to mankind, fell without dignity, and ended by displaying a littleness of character unparalleled in history.



## CHAPTER IX

“THE MOST DOCILE AND TRACTABLE MAN IN THE WORLD”

WE have already seen how Napoleon avowed his intention of insulting Admiral Cockburn before his officers, and how he was only prevented from doing so by the stupid brutality of the valet who slammed the door in the Admiral's face ; and we have seen also how the Emperor applauded the servant's insolence.

His treatment of the new Governor was in keeping with this prelude. It disclosed at once the settled policy which had been agreed upon by Napoleon and his entourage. That the Emperor had made up his mind to hate and insult whomsoever might be sent out to watch over him, is made evident by his description of the Governor's appearance. <sup>1</sup> “A man of middle height, slender, thin and stiff, with red hair and a blotchy countenance ; eyes oblique, with averted glance, rarely looking one straight in the face ; yellow eyebrows, thick and prominent.” “He is hideous,” said the Emperor, “his face is ruffianly.” “But let us not be hasty,” he added, with Pecksniffian hypocrisy, “to pronounce an

<sup>1</sup> *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, vol. ii. part 3, p. 59.

opinion ; his moral qualities may contradict his sinister appearance—that may not be altogether impossible.”

A man in the frame of mind disclosed by this offensive and grossly misleading description was manifestly “spoiling for a fight,” and it gives the key to all the troubles that followed.

On his part, Sir Hudson had evidently come to the island resolved to do all in his power, so far as his instructions would permit, to ameliorate the condition of the exiles, and to make their banishment as little galling as possible. <sup>1</sup>He took an early opportunity of inspecting the arrangements at Longwood, and entering Las Cases’ rooms, remained in them a quarter of an hour. He expressed his regret at the manner in which the exiles were housed ; their quarters, he said, were bivouacs rather than apartments, and he would give immediate orders to have them improved as much as possible ; adding, politely, that he had brought with him between fifteen hundred and two thousand French books, which he would put at their disposal as soon as they could be sorted out. This is Las Cases’ own account of the interview.

<sup>2</sup> On the 26th of April, 1816, Las Cases visited Plantation House and paid his respects to Lady Lowe, whom he describes as pretty, and amiable. The Governor, he says, showed him marked civility and good-will.

<sup>1</sup> *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, vol. ii, part 3, p. 92.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 86, etc.

They were, Sir Hudson said, really old friends, although Las Cases did not know it, for he had long known him through his "historical atlas," which had greatly delighted him at a time when he little thought he should ever make the author's acquaintance. He enlarged upon the praises which the atlas had everywhere received; he had often read the description of the battle of Jena with General Blücher, when he had been commissioner for England at Blücher's headquarters in the campaign of 1814. He had always admired the spirit of fairness and moderation which the work displayed towards England, although she was an enemy of France, but certain passages had greatly struck him at that time as being hostile to the Emperor. He ascribed this to the fact that Las Cases had been an *émigré*, and it seemed to him somewhat of a contradiction to find him now in Napoleon's suite.

This harmless remark, dropped in the course of a desultory chat, is ascribed to a sinister motive by Las Cases on the ground that the Governor had been a "chief of police" in Italy! The suggestion is as false as it was childish, for we have already described the positions held by Sir Hudson throughout his distinguished career, and that of "chief of police," in Italy or anywhere else, was certainly not one of them. But mark the malignant animosity which could distort an expression of casual surprise at finding Las Cases a voluntary exile in St. Helena, into an offensive innuendo,

Is it not sufficient to show the frame of mind that pervaded the little knot of irreconcilables at Longwood, and made all attempts to conciliate them hopeless from the outset ?

<sup>1</sup> “I could not help feeling,” Las Cases goes on, “a suspicion of insinuations being implied in this conversation ; if such was the case, and the Emperor had no doubt on the matter, things had been nicely begun on his part, and if I had had less self-respect I might have allowed him to proceed to greater lengths, but I contented myself with replying that he must have misunderstood the meaning of the passage referred to, which could not possibly apply to Napoleon, seeing I was now with him !”

<sup>2</sup> Another “insult” was soon detected in the form of two French books sent by the Governor for Napoleon’s diversion, one of which proved to be a work by the Abbé de Pradt on the embassy to Warsaw, which is said to have been uncomplimentary to the recipient. Surely this was “looking for trouble,” and watching for a grievance. What object could Sir Hudson have had in deliberately affronting his captive, just after he had been doing his best, poor man, to be polite to the follower ? Is it not probable that he sent the first book that happened to present itself, without troubling himself as to the contents, or that he thought a work

<sup>1</sup> *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, vol. ii. part 3, p. 88.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 88.

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on an episode of Napoleon's administration would have interested the exile? To an Englishman, a book criticizing the person who read it, would have been perused with perfect equanimity, and Lowe probably paid the Emperor the compliment of supposing that he was not as sensitive as a schoolgirl. It will be found, however, that almost all the complaints of the Governor's "brutalities" were equally puerile. The other volume was a collection of Napoleon's proclamations and bulletins, which ought to have annoyed him more than the other, seeing they would remind him of all the falsehoods he had put in circulation. Strange to say, this work afforded him much satisfaction, and he exclaimed with sublime conceit, "And yet they have the audacity to say that I did not know how to write!"

<sup>1</sup>The next occurrence Las Cases calls "*première insulte*." The Governor called at Longwood and required all the servants to be paraded before him, a highly necessary proceeding in view of the intrigues that were afterwards found to be going on in the household. This very reasonable request was insolently refused, de Montholon stating that it would only be complied with under compulsion. Turning to Las Cases the Governor remarked that all who were about the Emperor appeared to have no other object in view than to cause disputes and embarrassments, which was perfectly true. Las Cases replied with an impertinent lecture to the

<sup>1</sup> *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, vol. ii. part 3, p. 92.

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Governor as to the deportment he should observe, adding, with unconscious humour, that the Emperor desired to show himself the most docile and tractable man in the world, but that nothing should rob him of his self-respect, and that the consciousness and delicacy of his dignity were the only things that remained to him, and of which he could still claim to be the master. However, these absurd attempts to ride the high horse were of no avail. The servants were duly trotted out. The Governor said a few words to each, and then turning to de Montholon and Las Cases, remarked : “ For the present I am satisfied. I can now report to my Government that all have signed the required declaration of their own free will.”

<sup>1</sup> This declaration was to the effect that all those who had accompanied Napoleon to St. Helena had done so voluntarily, and would undertake to submit themselves in advance to all the regulations which might be deemed necessary to secure the Emperor's safe custody. <sup>2</sup> Las Cases had sent in his declaration, couched in highly provocative and offensive terms, embodying therein all the fables already concocted by his master as to the “ perfidy ” of the British Government, the “ conditional ” surrender to Maitland ; the interpretation to be put upon the impudent letter to the Prince Regent, and all the other artful misrepre-

<sup>1</sup> *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, vol. ii. part 3, p. 65.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

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sentations we have already detailed. He also managed to include a falsehood about the "horrible" Island of St. Helena and its detestable climate, which, he asserted, was prejudicial to the health of the Emperor and "that of all Europeans," contrary to the fact that St. Helena is particularly suited to Europeans, and is admitted to be one of the most healthy places in the world.

## CHAPTER X

### “DOCILITY”—À LA CORSE

<sup>1</sup> NAPOLEON had been sulking indoors for two days, when, on the 30th of April, 1816, the Governor was met by Las Cases on his way to Longwood. Sir Hudson inquired how the captive was, and the Count expressed himself uneasy as to his condition. He had been shut up alone all day and had seen none of his suite.

<sup>2</sup> When Las Cases returned to Longwood at eight o'clock, the Emperor informed him that the Governor had called, and proceeded to describe the interview. Sir Hudson had been received in the Emperor's room, where Napoleon *en déshabille* was reclining on a couch, from which he related afresh “with the most perfect calm” the stale fiction of his alleged betrayal. He protested against the treaty between the Allied Powers wherein he was dealt with as a prisoner. He demanded to know by what right these sovereigns claimed to dispose of him without his own consent—he who was

<sup>1</sup> *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, vol. ii. part 3, p. 117.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 118.



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their equal, and had often been their master. If he had retired to Russia, Alexander, who had been his friend, and with whom he had only had political differences, would, he asserted, at least have treated him as a monarch, even if he had not maintained him on the throne. The Governor had not denied these statements. If, continued Napoleon, he had sought an asylum in Austria, the Emperor Francis, under pain of eternal dishonour, could neither have excluded him from his empire, nor even from the hospitality of his house and family, of which Napoleon was a member. Again, the Governor had made no denial of these assertions. Moreover, the Emperor had said, if his personal interests had weighed with him, he might have defended them in France, sword in hand, in which case there could be no doubt that the Allies would have conceded to him by treaty a crowd of advantages—perhaps even territory.

He had not desired to do this, however; he had decided rather to abandon public affairs altogether, disgusted at seeing tricksters either betraying France, or grossly ignorant of her best interests; and the mass of the nation's representatives capable of saving themselves by trafficking with the country's independence. In these circumstances what had he done? He had sought an asylum in a country which was supposed to be governed by law; amongst a people whose greatest enemy he had been for twenty years.

What had the English done on the other hand ? Their acts would dishonour them in history. There was still an avenging Providence ; sooner or later they would pay the penalty. Ere long in their laws and their prosperity they would expiate the crime. The British Ministry had clearly shown by their instructions that they were determined to destroy him. Why had not the kings who had proscribed him condemned him openly to death ? The one would have been as legal as the other. A speedy end would have shown more vigour on their part than the slow death to which they had condemned him. Then, referring to the fate of Murat, he added, that the Calabrians had been more humane. He would not, he proceeded, commit suicide ; he would consider that an act of cowardice ; it was braver and more noble to surmount misfortune. Every man here below was bound to fulfil his destiny ; but if it was intended to keep him permanently at St. Helena, it would be a kindness to kill him, for there he suffered a daily death. The island was too small for him who had been accustomed to ride ten, fifteen or twenty leagues every day. The climate was not like that of France ; there was neither French sun nor season. Everything there engendered a mortal ennui. The position was disagreeable and unhealthy ; there was no water ; that part of the island was a desert ; it had been abandoned by the inhabitants.

The unfortunate Governor waited for this tornado of

irrelevant invective to exhaust itself, and then cogently and quietly pointed out that the restricted limits complained of had been defined by the British Government, who had also enjoined that an officer should be constantly in attendance on the Emperor.

To this Napoleon rejoined that in that case he would never leave his room, and that if the Governor's masters declined to allow him a larger freedom, he would henceforth ask for nothing from them. As a matter of fact, he went on, he wanted nothing from them, and finally told Sir Hudson to convey his views to the Government.

The Governor appears to have been very puzzled as to what to do with this "docile" gentleman. He tried the effect of the soft answer, which in ordinary circumstances is said to turn away wrath, but which in this instance was very much like preaching a homily on the virtue of kindness to a grizzly bear. He fell back upon the wooden house which he said was on its way to St. Helena, and which would, on its arrival, greatly improve the accommodation at Longwood. The vessel bringing it had also on board a large quantity of furniture and table delicacies, which he had no doubt would be acceptable to the exiles, and the Government were doing all in their power to alleviate the Emperor's lot.

This conciliatory reply only appears to have added fresh fuel to Napoleon's rage. He rejoined contemptuously that all this reduced itself to a mighty small

matter. He complained that his desire to subscribe to two English papers, *The Morning Chronicle* and *The Statesman*, had not been complied with. He had asked for books, his only remaining consolation, and although nine months had elapsed he had received none. He had asked for news of his wife and son, and had remained without an answer.

It may be remarked on this complaint that the interest manifested by Napoleon in the doings of his amiable spouse was not at all reciprocated by that volatile lady, who, after her husband's fall, thought no more about him and promptly sought consolation for his absence in the arms of Neipperg. Had the Emperor been informed of this conduct of Marie Louise, the communication would, no doubt, have been trumpeted about the world as another insult of the brutal British Government and its despicable minion.

The interview continued—a litany of insult, with deprecatory responses by the Governor.

As to the comestibles, the furniture and the house, the Emperor and Lowe were both soldiers, and knew of how little importance such things were. The Governor, said Napoleon, had been in the town of his nativity, and perhaps even in his house, which, without being the worst in the island, was no great shakes. Well, in spite of having occupied a throne, and distributed crowns, he had not forgotten his original condition. His sofa and his campaign bed were quite sufficient for him.

This was true enough. <sup>1</sup> In his early days the Bonaparte family were in a state of abject indigence, not even being able to keep a servant, and Madame Bonaparte *mère* and her three highly moral daughters had to scrub the floors and do the family washing.

Here the poor Governor meekly chimed in with his response. The wooden house was, at all events, a mark of attention.

The Emperor immediately got up steam again. Yes, to justify themselves, perhaps, in the eyes of Europe ; but for him they were matters of complete indifference. It was not a house and furniture he wanted, but rather an executioner and a coffin. The house and furniture appeared to him only a mockery ; the other things would be a real favour. He repeated that the orders of the Ministry led to that and he demanded it.

Again the puzzled Governor tried the effect of deprecation, and asked whether he had unintentionally given any offence. No, they had no fault to find with anything he had done since his arrival. One act alone had wounded them—the inspection of the servants, which was an affront to de Montholon, whose good faith it seemed to impugn ; and contemptible, painful and offensive towards himself—perhaps even towards

<sup>1</sup> *Napoleon's Brothers*, Atteridge, p. 5. *The Sisters of Napoleon*, Joseph Turquan (translation by W. R. H. Trowbridge), p. 86.

an English General who interposed between the Emperor and his *valet de chambre*.

During this scene, the Governor was seated in an arm-chair opposite Napoleon, who remained on his sofa. It was dusk ; evening had set in, and objects could not be clearly distinguished. "It was thus without result," said the Emperor, "that I endeavoured to study the play of his features, and to ascertain the impression I had produced."

It is difficult to imagine what effect this futile and irrelevant tirade was expected to produce upon the Governor, who had nothing whatever to do with the regulations laid down for Napoleon's detention, and who throughout the whole interview displayed a self-control and a desire to be conciliatory which were greatly to his credit. Many a man would have lost patience at having his time wasted in such a way.

However, the interview came to an end at last. <sup>1</sup> Sir Hudson, still anxious to show his good-will towards his charge, repeated on leaving the offer he had made several times during the conversation, to place the services of his own medical man at the Emperor's commands, but we are told that Napoleon "saw through the offer," and repeatedly refused it.

After completing his narrative the Emperor added to Las Cases : "What an ignoble and sinister face the

<sup>1</sup> *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, vol. ii. part 3, p. 124.



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Governor has! In the whole course of my life I never beheld its equal!"

And yet we were told a little before that "the evening had set in, and objects could not be clearly distinguished," so that the effort of the Emperor to read the Governor's face had been unavailing!

There are two inevitable conclusions to be drawn from this interview. First, that the new Governor entered upon his duties with an earnest and sincere desire to be agreeable to his charge. It will have been observed that he listened patiently while Napoleon was "maligning his opponents and glorifying himself"; carefully refraining even from any attempt to vindicate his Government from the unfounded imputations made against it; and second, that his subsequent interpositions were all directed to conciliating his interlocutor and disarming his wrath. Very gently indeed did Sir Hudson suggest that the additional accommodation then on its way was an earnest of the desire of the Powers to mitigate, as far as possible, the hardships of the Emperor's exile, and very brutal, unreasonable and insolent was the spirit in which his advances were received.

As to the Governor's anxious desire to do his utmost to assuage the lot of his captive, we have the invaluable testimony of Mr. Henry, whom we have already quoted. In his *Events of a Military Life*, he says: <sup>1</sup> "I believe

<sup>1</sup> *Events of a Military Life*, Henry, vol. ii. p. 57.

it to be a fact that Sir Hudson Lowe went to St. Helena determined to conduct himself with courtesy and kindness to Napoleon. I was intimately acquainted with the officer charged with the care of Longwood for nearly three years, and he assured me that the Governor repeatedly desired him to consult the comfort of the great man, and his suite. The two orderly officers at Longwood, Majors Blakeney and Nicholls, of the 66th Regiment, have given me the same assurance. I have myself seen courteous notes from Sir Hudson Lowe to these officers, accompanying pheasants and other delicacies sent from Plantation House for Napoleon's table. Even after two unfortunate interviews, when the Emperor worked himself into a rage, and used gross and insulting expressions to the Governor, evidently to put him into a passion, but without success (for Sir Hudson maintained perfect self-possession and self-command throughout), even after this open breach, the above civilities were not discontinued. Still, when a pheasant, the greatest rarity in the island, appeared on the Governor's table, one was sure to be sent to Longwood.”



## CHAPTER XI

BARRY O'MEARA

<sup>1</sup> **A**T the close of his interview with the servants at Longwood Sir Hudson had remarked that the place was finely situated, and that after all the Frenchmen were not so badly off. And when, in reply to this observation, it was complained that there was a want of shade about it, owing to the absence of trees, he rejoined, "some shall be planted." Las Cases calls this a "*mot atroce*"—"first barbarity of the Governor." This is beyond us altogether. It appears to show a desire on the part of Sir Hudson to remedy the defect complained of, and where the "atrocities" comes in we are at a loss to conceive. The incident is worth noting, as it shows that Longwood was now in full blast as a grievance factory, where the flimsiest raw material was skilfully worked up into a highly finished article.

<sup>2</sup> The Emperor continued to seclude himself indoors for six days, and then sent for Dr. O'Meara, whose subsequent slanders of the Governor we have already

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires de Ste. Hélène*, vol. ii. part 3, p. 94.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 216.

referred to, and Las Cases was employed to sound, and if possible, to win him over to the Emperor's side. The Count was to tell him that Napoleon had no complaint to make against him, so far ; that he considered him an honest man, but wished to know whether he was to look upon him as his personal medical adviser or as a prison surgeon forced upon him by the Government. Was he the Emperor's confessor or his warder ? Was he to make reports concerning him ? In the one case Napoleon would willingly continue to accept his services, and he gladly recognized his past ministrations ; in the other, he must ask him to discontinue his visits.

O'Meara replied " with affection " that his attendance was entirely of a professional nature, quite without a political meaning, and that he considered himself Napoleon's personal medical adviser ; that he made no reports, and had never been asked to do so, nor could he conceive an occasion which would induce him so to act, except in the case of serious illness, when he might have to call in others of the profession in consultation.

We invite the reader's particular attention to O'Meara's statement that he had never been asked to make reports about Napoleon to the Governor, and that he could not conceive such reports being demanded of him, in view of the fact that one of the gravest charges brought by him afterwards against Lowe was that Sir Hudson basely required him to act as a spy on the

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Emperor, under cover of his confidential position as medical adviser.

That Lowe placed him at Longwood as a spy is an absolute fabrication. He went there at Napoleon's own request, and as we have just seen, repudiated with scorn the bare idea that he would ever make reports to the Governor. That he did so afterwards is perfectly true. In fact, for some time he led a "double life," posing at Longwood as a devotee of the exile, and at Plantation House as the confidential agent of the Governor. It was only when he quarrelled with Sir Hudson and had to be removed from the island, that he came out as his avowed enemy, and to wreak his vengeance, pursued him with malignant slanders ever afterwards. We have from his own pen the view he took of his duty at Longwood. Writing to his friend, John Finlaison, of the Admiralty, to whom he was in the habit of freely unbosoming himself, he said, "I could not *make a practice* of communicating Bonaparte's language to Lowe, as it would produce no good purpose. On the contrary, it could not fail to aggravate, and render ten times worse the bad understanding which already prevails between them, and my situation would be converted into that of an incendiary, *neither am I placed about him as a spy. Doubtless I would think it my duty, and would instantly communicate to Sir Hudson any suspicions I might have of a plan for taking him off the island, or if I saw any improper communication.*"

As this doctor subsequently figured largely in the troubles which arose during Sir Hudson's governorship, and was an active agent in the campaign of calumny afterwards conducted with such malignity against that functionary, it will be opportune here to give some account of his career.

<sup>1</sup> Barry Edward O'Meara was born in 1786, and entered the Army in 1804 as Assistant-Surgeon to the 62nd Regiment, with which he served in Sicily and Calabria, and in Egypt in 1807. Soon after that date he had to leave the Army owing to his having been mixed up in a duel between two officers, and he then transferred his services to the Navy as Assistant-Surgeon to H.M.S. *Victorious*, and later became Surgeon to the *Bellerophon*, thus coming into personal relations with Napoleon. He seems to have behaved creditably during his naval experience, as Captain Maitland spoke highly of him. His knowledge of Italian attracted Napoleon's attention, and when the exile's own surgeon declined to attend him at St. Helena, the Admiralty, at the Emperor's request, permitted O'Meara to accompany him to the island as his medical attendant. At first his relations with the Governor were cordial, but Napoleon's demonstrations of affection and confidence (which created much jealousy amongst the suite) quite turned the head of the surgeon, who seems to have been an extremely vain and versatile

<sup>1</sup> *Dictionary of National Biography.*

person, and he became a fanatical partisan of his patient, with the inevitable result that he soon was at daggers drawn with Sir Hudson. In all Napoleon's campaign of insult and contumely against the Governor O'Meara took an active part; and his conduct became so outrageous that in July, 1818, he was dismissed from his post. He violated his duty to his country by surreptitiously bringing with him to England an autograph letter from the Emperor, requesting all his friends to believe everything the surgeon might tell them regarding his position and opinions; with a special message to his "*bonne Louise*" to allow the medico to kiss her hand—apparently without first obtaining the consent of Neipperg to that interesting ceremony. On arriving in England, in October, 1818, he wrote to the Admiralty insinuating that the Governor meditated doing Napoleon to death, and O'Meara's name was promptly struck off the navy list. His whole conduct, both while at St. Helena and afterwards, was disgraceful, and his professional capacity seems to have been contemptible, as he diagnosed Napoleon's disease as liver complaint induced by the malignity of the climate, whereas it was, of course, the family disease of cancer, of which Napoleon's father had died at a comparatively early age, and to which his brother Lucien, his uncle Fesch and his sister Caroline all fell victims. Either he was a most incompetent physician, or he wilfully misrepresented the case in order to support the contention of the French

exiles that the climate of St. Helena was fatal to Europeans.

It is needless to say that on arriving in England, O'Meara found himself a very precious asset of the Whig Opposition, who, as we have said, cast all scruples to the winds in their unpatriotic war against the Tory Ministry. He was conspicuous as a champion of Queen Caroline, who was also taken under the wing of the Whigs for the same reason ; and he became a member of the Reform Club, and a hanger-on of O'Connell. In fact, he identified himself with every cause that offered him a chance of getting even with the Ministers, and meanwhile occupied himself with publishing libels on the Governor. His first effort in that line was the anonymous appearance of *Letters from the Cape of Good Hope*, which was afterwards translated into French. This was answered by a counterblast, also anonymous ; and in 1819 the polemical war was continued by the publication of a pamphlet by O'Meara in reply to the former. In 1822 appeared his *Napoleon in Exile, or a Voice from St. Helena*, which created a great sensation and soon reached a fifth edition, while, of course, it was translated into French. The aspersions on the Governor contained in this publication were rebutted by the *Quarterly* and *Blackwood*, and sustained by the *Edinburgh*, a fact which sufficiently shows how completely the controversy had degenerated into a party conflict. The ex-Governor applied for a criminal

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information against his traducer, but failed, owing to lapse of time. Forsyth's *Captivity of Napoleon at St. Helena*, published as late as 1853, proved that O'Meara's statements were in the main gross exaggerations, inspired by bitter personal hatred of Sir Hudson.

O'Meara died on the 3rd of June, 1836, and will stand in the pillory of history as one of the most fanatical and unscrupulous champions of the greatest and most inveterate enemy that England ever encountered, and as the persistent traducer of an honourable and distinguished soldier, who, by unremitting vigilance, saved the civilized world from the renewal of anarchy and carnage, which would have been the inevitable consequence of Napoleon's escape.

## CHAPTER XII

### CORSICAN POLITENESS

<sup>1</sup>ON the 9th of May, 1816, a convoy arrived at St. Helena from Bengal, and amongst the passengers was Lady Loudoun, the wife of the Governor-General of India. Of course she expressed a wish to be introduced to the celebrated exile, and the Governor accordingly gave a dinner in her honour, to which Napoleon was invited. Unfortunately, the Allied Powers had, as we have said, agreed to withhold from him the title of Emperor, and to recognize his right to no other than that of General. Lowe thus found himself on the horns of a dilemma—either to run the risk of displeasing Lady Loudoun, or of touching his prisoner on the tenderest spot. The Governor unluckily chose the latter alternative, and a note was in due course left at Longwood inviting “General Bonaparte” to dinner at Plantation House. The “Grand Maréchal” received the missive and handed it over to his master, who, shrugging his shoulders, exclaimed, “This is too stupid !

<sup>1</sup> *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, vol. ii. part 3, p. 239.



No reply." The incident did not tend to improve the Emperor's attitude towards Sir Hudson, but added another to the grievances in stock at Longwood.

<sup>1</sup> A week after this occurrence, during which Napoleon had doubtless been "nursing his wrath to keep it warm," the Governor presented himself at the grievance factory. As Las Cases states, the estrangement, misunderstanding and bitterness which it had been determined by the Emperor and his friends to create in their relations with Sir Hudson, had been rapidly growing, and neither party was by any means well disposed towards the other.

The Governor called at three in the afternoon, attended by his military secretary. He desired, he said, to see the Emperor, in order to talk business with him. Napoleon was said to be unwell, and was not dressed; nevertheless, he consented to receive his visitor, and in a few minutes passed into the salon, where Las Cases introduced Sir Hudson.

Las Cases waited in the antechamber, with the military secretary, and could gather from the sound of his master's voice that the Emperor was in one of his furies, and that the encounter was extremely hot. The interview was very long and extremely stormy, and at its close Napoleon sent for Las Cases in the garden, and proceeded as follows to describe it.

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires de Ste. Hélène*, vol. ii. part 3, p. 290, etc.

<sup>1</sup> "Well," said he, "I regret to say that the crisis has been acute. They have sent me worse than a gaoler. Sir Hudson is a hangman. Anyhow, I received him to-day with my most aggressive attitude; head bent, ear advanced. One would have taken us for two rams ready for a butting match, and my fury must have been extreme, for I felt my left calf vibrating. That is always an unmistakable symptom with me, and I have not felt it for a long time."

The Governor had begun with some embarrassment, and in halting words. Small wonder, unhappy man, after his previous experience of the captive's brutality. The wooden house had arrived—no doubt Napoleon had learnt this from the newspapers—it was intended as an addition to his accommodation—he (Sir Hudson) would be glad to know what the Emperor thought of it; to all of which the exile replied by silence and an expressive gesture. Then passing rapidly on to other matters, he explained with heat that he wanted nothing except to be left alone; that while having much to complain of in Admiral Cockburn, that officer was at all events good at heart; and that he (Napoleon), in spite of all the Admiral's vexations, had always had complete confidence in him; that now it was no longer so; that for the last month, in which he had found himself in other hands, he had been more tormented than during the previous six months.

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires de Ste. Hélène*, vol. ii. part 3, p. 71, etc.

The Governor, who was evidently getting tired of these outbursts of rudeness, replied that he had not come there to receive lessons; to which the Emperor insolently rejoined that it was not for want of requiring them. He then burst into a tornado of ungovernable rage, which recalls Talleyrand's expression of regret that so great a man should have been so badly brought up.

"You have told me, sir, that your instructions are much more severe than those of the Admiral. Are they to put me to death by sword or poison? I am ready for anything at the hands of your Ministers; behold me! Execute your victim. I don't know what poison you would employ, but as to killing with the sword you have already found the method. If you presume, as you have threatened, to violate the sanctity of my domicile, I tell you that the brave 53rd shall only enter it over my body.

"On learning of your arrival, I congratulated myself on being about to meet a military officer, who, having been engaged in important duties on the Continent, would understand how to act with decency towards me. I have discovered that I was grossly mistaken."

The Governor here replied with great propriety and self-control that he was an officer in the service, and under the regulations of his country.

This set the Emperor off again.

"Your Nation," he went on, "your Government, you yourself, will be covered with opprobrium on my account; your children will partake of the infamy, for so posterity will decree. Has barbarity exceeded yours, sir, when a few days ago you invited me to your table under the style of General Bonaparte, in order to make me the laughing-stock and entertainment of your guests? Have you reflected one moment on the title you thought fit to give me? I refuse to be considered by you as General Bonaparte; neither you nor any one else on earth have the right to deprive me of the dignities that are justly mine. If Lady Loudoun had been within the limits imposed upon me, I would undoubtedly have waited upon her, because I have no quarrel with a woman, but I should have considered myself as paying her a great honour. I am told that you have offered to send me some of your staff-officers to attend me in the island, instead of the ordinary officer stationed at Longwood. Sir, when soldiers have received their baptism of fire on the field of battle, they are all equal in my eyes; their rank is not what I object to, it is being compelled to see them there at all, which is a tacit reminder of the very thing against which I protest. I am in no sense a prisoner of war. I am therefore in no way bound to submit to the regulations which are the result of that condition. I am only in your power as victim of a most horrible breach of confidence."

The Governor would appear to have borne this tirade

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with philosophic resignation, doubtless attributing it to Corsican ideas of politeness, for on leaving, he calmly requested permission to present his secretary to the Emperor; who replied that it would be useless; that if that officer had any delicacy of feeling (of which, by the way, Napoleon showed himself such a master!) he would hardly desire it, and, that so far as he himself was concerned, he had no wish for the introduction. That, after all, friendly relations were impossible between gaolers and prisoners, and that it was consequently perfectly futile. With that he dismissed the Governor.

Having repeated his insults and provocations, and covered Sir Hudson and his Government with the foulest abuse,<sup>1</sup> Napoleon, during the evening, indulged in reflections on the scene of the afternoon; dwelling on the abominable treatment of which he was the victim, upon the diabolical hatred which prompted it, and the brutality with which it was carried out; and, after some moments of silent thought, exclaimed to Las Cases, "My friend, they mean to kill me here! that is certain!"

Before taking leave of this interview, let us analyse it briefly. It was certainly somewhat tactless of the Governor to invite Napoleon to dinner at all, bearing in mind his manifest determination to repel with con-

<sup>1</sup> *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, vol. ii. part 3, p. 295.

tumely all conciliatory overtures, and seeing also that the invitation must of necessity have been addressed to "General Bonaparte."

His motive, however, in paying this second visit was a thoroughly good one. He commenced with the information that the additional house accommodation had arrived, and desired to know Napoleon's views on the matter. The reply was an insulting comparison between Sir Hudson and his predecessor, whom so long as it suited Napoleon to hate, he had hated, and whom he was only prevented by an accident from insulting before his officers. Napoleon then suggests that the Governor means to kill him, and launches out again into a general abuse of the English Government and their instructions, with which his visitor had no more to do than the man in the moon. His statement that he was not a prisoner of war was true in the technical sense. He was held in durance for that "reason of state" which had been repeatedly invoked by him during his whole career, and in virtue of which he had incarcerated in his fortresses, without trial, hundreds of people, from Pope to pilot.

The Governor, on his side, would seem to have exercised a marvellous degree of self-control. Only once was he betrayed into a remark savouring of irritation, and that was when Napoleon had insultingly assumed the rôle of mentor in manners. Assuredly, not one man in ten thousand would have shown the Governor's

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forbearance under such intolerable provocation. That he felt it is clear, for, as he passed out, he met the "Grand Maréchal" and bitterly complained to him of the Emperor's behaviour.

## CHAPTER XIII

### GUERRA AL CUCHILLO

A FURTHER instance of the war to the knife, which had now been openly declared by Longwood against Plantation House, was afforded a short time after the interview described in the previous chapter.

Mr. Balcombe, who it will be remembered was the owner of The Briars, where Napoleon passed his first days in St. Helena, had been commissioned by the British Government to supply the wants of the French exiles at its expense, and informed Las Cases of the fact. <sup>1</sup> That gentleman replied to this well-meant communication, that having means of his own, he had made up his mind not to be beholden in any way to the Government, and asked Mr. Balcombe to obtain permission from Sir Hudson to receive a draft on London, which could be applied to the purchase of what was needed, without special authorization.

The arrest of one of the servants at Longwood, and the retention of certain letters for irregularity of address, added fuel to the flames; <sup>2</sup> but in a moment of post-

<sup>1</sup> *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, vol. ii. part 3, p. 317.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* vol. iii. part 5, p. 270.



prandial candour Napoleon admitted that in the last interview he had treated the Governor very badly, and that only the position in which he was placed could justify his conduct. But he added that it was permissible for him to indulge in outbursts of temper which in other circumstances would make him blush. "If I had been at the Tuileries," said he, "my conscience would have compelled me to apologize, but here I have no desire to do so." Then he went on to pay an unintentional tribute to Sir Hudson's self-restraint, by remarking that the Governor seemed little affected by the insults heaped upon him—his delicacy did not appear wounded. "I would have preferred," said Napoleon, "for the sake of his honour, to have seen him get into a rage, or slam the door violently on his exit." And if the Governor had so acted, his conduct would have been reported to Europe by the next opportunity as another outrage by the brutal gaoler. It is evident from this admission that Sir Hudson's imperturbable stoicism goaded Napoleon to fury, as it defeated his settled purpose of provoking the Governor to a ballyragging match, which would only have brought him down to the level of his prisoner. As it was, Lowe maintained a dignified reticence which compares most favourably with the vulgar vituperation of Napoleon, whose whole behaviour proves that, in the words of Wellington, "the fellow was no gentleman."

It may be remarked here, that Napoleon reserved

all his brutality for those who were appointed to secure his person ; and that, with his usual cunning, he made himself vastly agreeable to all the English whom he merely saw as visitors. In this way he achieved a double object—first, that it might be reported in Europe that he was subjected to all kinds of cruelties by his custodians, and second, to secure by his affability and condescension to others a favourable report of his exquisite politeness and good-natured urbanity ; on the one hand to arouse indignation at his treatment, and on the other to evoke sympathy by having himself represented as a model of courtesy and good temper under the grossest provocation. He took care also to speak well of all the English he met at St. Helena, other than Cockburn and Lowe. Of Colonel Wilks, ex-Governor of the island, the Balcombes, and all the naval and other officers who called on him, Napoleon expressed himself in terms of the utmost regard, and they, of course, delighted with his geniality, returned home ardent sympathizers with the “victim,” to spread the fable of his wrongs.

Sir Hudson, in view of the attitude of open and unbending hostility assumed by the Emperor towards him, tried the effect of expostulation with “Grand Maréchal” Bertrand, but with no better result. At this interview Sir Hudson frankly reproached the exiles with complaining of their treatment without just cause ; he stated that, all things considered, they were

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very well off, and should be contented with their lot ; that, on the contrary, they appeared determined to abuse the privileges they enjoyed ; and that in any event it was his duty to satisfy himself every day, by ocular evidence, of the presence of the Emperor. This last point was of the greatest importance. It will be remembered that the Government's instructions were to permit every indulgence to Napoleon " compatible with the entire security of his person." Lowe recognized the enormous responsibility which this imposed upon him, and he was fully alive to the fact that even the isolation of St. Helena was not a sufficient guarantee against his prisoner's resourcefulness in evasion. The Emperor had not been seen for nearly a week, and what would have been the consequences to the world and to Lowe himself had the Emperor succeeded in escaping under the pretence of being confined to his room all that time ? It was absolutely necessary that his presence should be verified, even at the cost of intrusion into his *sanctum sanctorum*, and Lowe acted with great consideration in making this clear to Bertrand, so that he might break it to his master, instead of communicating it to Napoleon direct. On this occasion, at least, Lowe showed some of that tact of which he is accused of being entirely devoid. It was a painful duty, which he discharged in the best possible way.

It is needless to say that when this intimation was generally known among the household at Longwood,

it was received with execration as another "*barbarie du Gouverneur*," and a great deal of tall talk about dying rather than submitting to it was indulged in.

The avowed determination of the Frenchmen to make his duty as difficult as possible, and to lose no opportunity of thwarting and insulting him, compelled the Governor to keep a strict surveillance over the establishment at Longwood. He had now been convinced, by unmistakable evidence, that his overtures of conciliation and indulgence had been rejected once and for all, with insult and contumely, and that bitter and unrelenting war was all that he could expect. The attitude he had assumed towards the exiles on his arrival makes it clear that, had his kind advances been met in a similar spirit, a system approaching parole would have been tacitly adopted, and the Emperor and his suite would have found their lot much pleasanter than it necessarily now became. A declaration of war *à outrance* against the British Government and its representative involved corresponding precautions on the other side, and forced the Governor to be perpetually on his guard lest the campaign of insults to himself should be extended to intrigues and plottings of a much more dangerous character. He saw clearly that he had a nest of inveterate and unscrupulous enemies to deal with, and was compelled to defend his country's interests and his own by following strictly the instructions given him by his Government. For

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this result, which redounded so much to their disadvantage, Napoleon and his troublesome followers were alone responsible.

The ingenuity of the Frenchmen in discovering what they called "*méchancetés*" on the part of the Governor and his masters, was really so stupendous that one cannot help feeling for it a sort of admiration. We have seen that the British Government had sought to add to the comfort of the Longwood establishment by sending out a supply of furniture. Even this was worked up into an offence. The Emperor complained of the *gaucherie* displayed by those charged with its transmission, and alleged that in sending what in itself would have been welcome, the occasion had been seized for a fresh affront. In what this "affront" consisted does not appear. It was doubtless purely imaginary, and invented to further the intransigent policy now in full operation. At any rate it was resolved not to make use of this furniture, and also to reject two fowling-pieces which the English Government, with well-meant but misplaced courtesy, had sent out for presentation to Napoleon.

The redundancy of the Emperor's household was a matter which called for comment by the British Government. It involved a very heavy expenditure, for in spite of the alleged insalubrity of the climate, St. Helena appeared to have a tonic effect on the appetites of the exiles; and the table expenses were enormous. And

no wonder. <sup>1</sup> Barry O'Meara, who was a daily spectator of the Longwood saturnalia, thus describes the round of guzzling and gormandizing that was the permanent order of the day. There were two dinners, the first at 11 or 12 o'clock, at which roast and boiled joints with various ragouts, fricassees, etc., were served up, and washed down with wine and liqueurs; the second at 8, which only differed from the first in being supplied with more dishes. Besides these two meals, they all had (with the exception of Napoleon, who only ate twice a day, but then certainly very heartily) something like an English breakfast in bed, between 8 and 9 in the morning, and a luncheon with wine at 4 or 5 in the afternoon. O'Meara goes on to say, "I am convinced that between their two dinners and luncheon they consume three or four times as much as any English family composed of a similar number of persons. These two dinners, then, cause a great consumption of meat and wine, which, together with their mode of cookery, require a great quantity of either butter or oil, both excessively dear in this place. Their *soupes consommées* (for they are, except one or two, the greatest gluttons and epicures I ever saw), producing great waste of meat, in a place where the necessities of life are so dear, altogether render necessary a very great expenditure of money daily."<sup>2</sup>

The retinue of servants (all fanatical devotees of the

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, Forsyth, vol. i. p. 361.

<sup>2</sup> From 1st of October, 1816, to 30th of June, 1817, 10,318

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Emperor, and ready to break every law in his cause) and the members of the suite, not forgetting the two ladies and the Irish surgeon (who was acting a double part as the pretended friend of both sides), were by their very numbers a source of great danger in the island. It was a hostile encampment, a hot-bed of intrigue, sowing suspicion broadcast around it, and surreptitiously conveying falsehoods to Europe by every available opportunity.

The Governor remonstrated with "Grand Maréchal" Bertrand on the reckless extravagance of the household at Longwood. He said that his Government had never intended to provide for more than a daily table of four covers, and intimated that if more were required the exiles might provide it at their own expense. This seems a reasonable position. These people had come there of their own accord, and could hardly expect to be supported in a life of easy idleness at the unlimited cost of a Government against which they had declared open war. What might have been quietly winked at if they had accepted their position with a good grace, became a piece of intolerable impudence as things actually were.

The falsehoods which were being circulated in Europe from this centre of misrepresentation, and which were conveyed out of the island by persons who had been

bottles of various kinds of wine, and 1,512 bottles of spirits, were consumed by the Longwood household.

imposed on by Napoleon's consummate mastery of the art of humbug, made it necessary rigidly to enforce the rules laid down for the regulation of correspondence, much to the indignation, real or assumed, of the "victims" of this "persecution," particularly in the case of Madame Bertrand. But the Governor, who had seen a great deal of the world, was no doubt quite alive to the fact that as an intriguer, a woman is a thousand times more artful and dangerous than a man, and consequently kept a sharp look out on that lady's doings. <sup>1</sup> He found her carrying on a correspondence with people in the town without his knowledge, and promptly had the letter impounded and returned to her, accompanied by an official interdiction of such clandestine communications in future. As to the restrictions which he found himself obliged to impose upon the activities of the Longwood intriguers, he pointed out that if they were unpalatable there was always the alternative of leaving the island.

Whenever, consistently with his duty, the Governor could return good for evil he did so. In a letter to Europe one of the suite had ordered some toilet requisites. Lowe drew his attention to the fact that the articles in question could be obtained from the supplies sent out by the Government. The thanks he received for this act of courtesy was an unmannerly reply that the person concerned preferred to buy them.

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, Forsyth, vol. i. p. 200, etc.



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To this the Governor dryly rejoined that he was quite at liberty to do so if it pleased him ; to which the other insolently responded that he preferred to choose his own shop. Sir Hudson stated that he would acquaint his Government with this contemptuous refusal of a well-meant offer, and received the reply that it would be much more agreeable that he should report to his Ministers refusals rather than requests. These incidents Las Cases describes as annoyances (*tracasseries*) on the part of the Governor. Any fair-minded person must see that the boot was on the other leg.

## CHAPTER XIV

### AGRO-DOLCE

ON the 16th of July, 1816, at two in the afternoon, the Governor had another interview with Napoleon.<sup>1</sup> Earlier in the day, the Emperor had gone for a drive with O'Meara, into whose sympathetic ear he had poured a tirade of abuse against Sir Hudson. He was therefore in good trim for an encounter with his *bête-noir*; he was indeed in his very best form, as will be seen from what follows.

The audience lasted close on two hours. <sup>2</sup> Napoleon, with "damned iteration," went through the same old story as before; recapitulated all the alleged wrongs he pretended to have suffered, and appealed in turn to the Governor's reason, to his mind, to his feelings, and to his heart. What object he could expect to achieve by this discourse it is impossible to imagine, seeing that the Governor was there merely to carry out the instructions he had received. We are told that

<sup>1</sup> *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, vol. iii. part 5, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 16, etc.

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the oration produced no effect on "this man without nerves," from whom nothing could be hoped.

Sir Hudson informed his interlocutor that in arresting the domestic he was not aware that the man was in the service of the Longwood household, and denied having read Madame Bertrand's impounded letter. The Emperor replied that the letter written by the Governor to the "Grand Maréchal" was foreign to French manners, and altogether opposed to French ideas, and that if he, the Emperor, had been an ordinary General in private life, he would have cut the throat of any man who should have dared to send him such a missive. He continued, That a man so well known and so universally venerated in Europe as the "Grand Maréchal" could not be insulted with impunity and without bringing on the offender social opprobrium; that the Governor did not understand his position with regard to the exiles; that all his acts were already matters of history, and that the very conversation then in progress was history. That Lowe daily discredited his Government and himself by his conduct, and would in due time suffer for it. That his Government would disavow him in the long run, and that a stain would rest upon his name which would descend to his children. "Would you like to know," stormed the docile one, "what we think of you? We believe you to be capable of anything, *mais de tout*; and so long as you manifest your hate

we shall cherish our opinion. I will wait a little longer, so as to make quite certain, and I shall then deplore, as the worst act of the British Ministry in my regard, not having sent me to St. Helena, but having appointed you to the governorship. You are a greater curse to us than all the miseries of this frightful rock."

The Governor, who by this time had no doubt become accustomed to these calculated outbursts of fury, kept his temper admirably, and merely replied that he was only accountable to his Government, and that so far as the Emperor was concerned he could get on pretty well with him, but as to his followers, they did nothing but aggravate matters, and foment ill-feeling.

With respect to the three Commissioners of the Great Powers, who had arrived a short time before, to keep an eye on him, and whom the Governor now desired to present, Napoleon refused to receive them in their political capacity, but stated that he would willingly do so as private individuals. That he had no feeling against any of them, not even against M. Montchenu, the French representative, who was doubtless a very worthy man, and who, having been his subject for ten years, and one of the *émigrés*, probably owed to him the privilege of returning to France. After all, said Napoleon, he was a Frenchman, a title which was sacred to him, and which no political opinions could destroy.

The Emperor next referred to the proposed additions

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to the house, which had been the main object of the Governor's visit, and refused to have anything to do with them, saying that he preferred to put up with his present wretched quarters rather than purchase better at the expense of noise and the discomfort of rearranging his household. He added that the buildings which it was proposed to erect would take years to complete, by which time those for whom they were intended would either no longer be worth the trouble, or would have been delivered by Providence out of their enemy's hands.

Seeing his charge as intractable as ever, and that every conciliatory attempt on his part only added fuel to the flames, the Governor brought the interview to a close.

<sup>1</sup> Shortly after this a fire broke out at Longwood, in the drawing-room chimney. It was a golden opportunity to accuse the Governor of attempting to incinerate the whole party, but somehow or other it was missed. *Indignor quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus.*

Admiral Sir Pulteney Malcolm had arrived at St. Helena early in July, in succession to Sir George Cockburn, and on the 25th called at Longwood. <sup>2</sup> The interview which took place between him and the Emperor is interesting, because the treatment accorded

<sup>1</sup> *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, vol. iii. part 5, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 69, etc.

him offers a significant contrast to Napoleon's behaviour to Sir George and the Governor. We have seen his conduct towards Cockburn while that officer was temporarily in authority, and how as soon as he had departed the Emperor began to compare him favourably with Lowe. Sir Pulteney had no connection with Napoleon's captivity, and could therefore be treated with civility, in order that his sympathies might be aroused for the captive, and perhaps the seeds of enmity sown between him and the Governor. The Emperor was therefore on his best behaviour. There was nothing of the pugnacious ram about him on this occasion, with foot advanced, head bent down and ear thrown forward, ready to butt ferociously at his unwilling antagonist. He was the very incarnation of cordiality, moderation and sweet reasonableness, and engaged in a friendly chat with Malcolm for nearly three hours. The Admiral found himself, says the narrator, in agreement with the Emperor on a crowd of subjects, and we know Disraeli's definition of an agreeable man, as a man who agrees with you. He admitted that escape from St. Helena was extremely difficult—not impossible be it noted—and he could see no reason why Napoleon should not have the run of the whole island. He considered it absurd not to have lodged the exile in Plantation House—the residence of the Governor. He understood—but only since his arrival at St. Helena—how offen-

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sive the title of "General" must be to Napoleon. He said that Lady Loudoun had made herself ridiculous in the island, and would be the laughing-stock of London. He was of opinion that the Governor's intentions were undoubtedly good, but that he had no tact. The British Ministry had been puzzled what to do with the Emperor, but were not actuated by hatred against him. In England he would have continued to be an object of dread for the whole Continent; he would have been far too dangerous and powerful a force in the hands of the Opposition.

The Emperor showed some emotion when the Commissioners of the Allied Powers were mentioned, and bitterly complained of the Emperor of Austria, "who had gone down on his knees to him to marry his daughter," to whom "he had twice restored his capital," and who now ungratefully repaid these overwhelming benefits by retaining Napoleon's wife and son. He also fell foul of Alexander, who had covered himself with glory by being the Emperor's friend; against whom he had only waged "political" warfare, and with whom he had never had personal differences—an ingenious way of describing the Moscow campaign, with all its devastating horrors.

The Admiral is not recorded as having made any comment upon these highly original references to recent history. He was a simple-minded sailor, upon whom Napoleon could practise his blandishments with

perfect success. <sup>1</sup> Las Cases says that Sir Pulteney conducted his part of the interviews in such perfect good taste that the Emperor discussed matters with him with as little heat as if they were entirely extraneous to him.

We have already mentioned that the servants at Longwood were all fanatical devotees of Napoleon, ready to break any laws in his service. <sup>2</sup> This was strikingly proved, shortly after the interview just narrated, when it was discovered that one of them had resolved to assassinate the Governor. The man was a Corsican, Santini by name, and Corsicans are notoriously addicted to the vendetta, and murder to them is (or was) quite in the ordinary course of business. Santini had been brooding for some time over the wrongs to which he imagined his master had been subjected; his hatred had also no doubt been inflamed by the conversations he had overheard among the suite, and by Napoleon's own violent invectives against the Governor. He therefore formed the design of shooting Sir Hudson with a double-barrelled gun. Fortunately, he divulged his murderous intention to a fellow-servant, Cipriani, a compatriot of his. Cipriani, however, was apparently a degenerate Corsican, who did not approve of this drastic method of redressing the Emperor's grievances. He well knew that his countryman was

<sup>1</sup> *Memorial de Ste. Hélène*, vol. iii. part 5, p. 70.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 75, etc.



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quite capable of carrying out his threat, and, greatly alarmed, imparted the information to several other members of the household, who united in urging remonstrances to the intending assassin. Finding, however, that this only increased his rage, they were obliged to divulge the matter to the Emperor, who, although having been for many years in the wholesale man-slaying business, was not prepared to stoop to the retail branch of the trade. He sent for Santini, and put his veto on the project, pointing out that its execution would cause a great scandal, and render him (the Emperor) open to the charge of having instigated the crime. It is probable, by the way, that his approval of the conduct of the valet in insulting Admiral Cockburn may have encouraged Santini to proceed to extreme lengths against that officer's still more hated successor.

## CHAPTER XV

### MEGALOMANIA

<sup>1</sup> ON the 18th of August the weather was very wet, and kept Napoleon indoors, which did not, in all probability, add to his good temper, and in the afternoon the Governor unluckily made his appearance at Longwood. As soon as he was seen the Emperor tried to hide himself in the wood; but directly afterwards de Montholon came to announce that Sir Hudson and Admiral Malcolm requested the honour of an interview, and they were received in the garden, the weather having cleared. The suite remained apart with the Governor's officers, and the Emperor soon opened fire, walking between the two Englishmen, and addressing himself *to* the Admiral and *at* the Governor. Napoleon went through *da capo* all that he had said at previous audiences, and by this time he must have got his part by heart. Sir Malcolm, who did his best as intermediary, under difficult circumstances, endeavoured to mollify the irascible captive as to the Governor's

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires de Ste. Hélène*, vol. iii. part 5, p. 267, etc.

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intentions ; but the Emperor began his provocations afresh with the insulting remark—"M. Lowe's faults proceed from his habits of life. He has only commanded foreign deserters—Piedmontese, Corsicans, Sicilians and all renegades and traitors to their country, the dregs and scum of Europe. If he had commanded men, Englishmen, if he were one himself, he would have proper respect for those who are entitled to honour." He went on to say that there was a *moral* courage as necessary as courage on the field of battle ; that Sir Hudson had not shown that courage in his dealings with the exiles ; dreaming of nothing but their escape, instead of adopting reasonable, sensible and well-thought-out plans for preventing it. The Emperor added that his person was in the power of the wicked, but his soul would remain as haughty and as independent as when he was on his throne or at the head of four hundred thousand men, making and unmaking kings.

As to the reduction of the Longwood expenses, the Emperor replied, "All these details are really too painful to me ; they are despicable. Who asks you for anything ? Who requires you to feed me ? When you cut off my supplies, those brave soldiers yonder—pointing towards the camp of the 53rd—" will take pity on me ; I shall seat myself at the table of their grenadiers, and I am certain they will not repel the first, the oldest soldier in Europe." He reproached the Governor with having kept back certain books which

had been sent to him, and when Lowe replied that it was because they had been addressed to him under the title of Emperor, he hotly rejoined, with ineffable vainglory, "And who has given you the right to deny me that title? In a few short years your Lord Castle-reagh, your Lord Bathurst and all the rest of them, including you yourself, will be buried in the dust of oblivion, or if your names are remembered at all, it will be for the indignities you have heaped upon me; while the Emperor Napoleon will, without doubt, remain for ever the theme and ornament of history, and the pole-star of civilized mankind. Your libels can effect nothing against me; you have lavished millions on them, and with what result? Truth pierces the densest clouds; it blazes like the sun; like the sun, it is imperishable."

The Emperor, according to Las Cases, admitted afterwards that in this conversation he had again grossly and persistently ill-treated Sir Hudson, and he had the candour to avow that the Governor had never been wanting in courtesy. He restricted himself to muttering frequently between his teeth observations which could not be distinguished. What a picture! On the one side unbridled and ruffianly insolence, combined with an egoism bordering on insanity; on the other an iron self-control, the almost superhuman determination of a man of inflexible will to suffer no insult to goad him into retaliation.

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<sup>1</sup> Once, when the Governor said that he had asked to be recalled, the Emperor seized the remark to get in another sting of his asp-like tongue—it was the most agreeable news he had ever heard! The only lapse of manners observed by Napoleon—a pretty critic of deportment—was the Governor's brusque withdrawal, while the Admiral retired with deliberation and many salaams.

<sup>2</sup> Napoleon confessed that, after all, he was ashamed of his behaviour. "I will," said he, "never again see this man. He makes me forget myself. It is beneath my dignity; when I see him before me, words escape me which would have been inexcusable at the Tuileries. If there is any excuse for them here it is my being under his hands and in his power."

We beg the reader to remember that this description of his shocking and outrageous behaviour was given by Napoleon himself to one of his most fanatical worshippers; it is not the account of an enemy; and we leave all impartial judges to decide which of the two men showed to greater advantage during the interview.

<sup>3</sup> With reference to this interview, Mr. Henry gives the following extract from a letter to himself from an officer who served a long time at St. Helena: "I

<sup>1</sup> *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, vol. iii. part 5, p. 269.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Events of a Military Life*, Henry, vol. ii. p. 57.

dined with Admiral Sir Pulteney Malcolm the day on which the last interview took place between Napoleon and Sir Hudson Lowe, Sir Pulteney being present. The Admiral spoke freely of what passed on the occasion, mentioned the insulting expressions used by Napoleon to the Governor, which had much shocked Sir Pulteney, and his most ungentlemanly bearing throughout the interview, and bore ample testimony to the cool replies and admirable forbearance of Sir Hudson Lowe."

Shortly after this fresh outbreak of scurrility, the conspirators laid their heads together to concoct <sup>1</sup> an "official" reply to a written communication of the Governor, relative to the Commissioners of the Allied Powers, and the impossibility of making ends meet in the Longwood budget. This document is very lengthy, and its substance was the work of de Montholon, the whole production being afterwards revised and edited by Napoleon in conjunction with the other satellites. It is worth describing, because it sets forth with much ingenuity and careful elaboration the "case" for the Emperor against the Allied Powers.

It begins by acknowledging receipt from the Governor of a copy of the treaty of the 2nd of August, 1815, between England, Austria, Russia and Prussia, for the securing of Napoleon's person.

The Emperor then formally protests against the

<sup>1</sup> *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, vol. iii. part 5, p. 287, etc.

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contents of the treaty, and asserts that he is not a prisoner of England. He repeats that after having abdicated in favour of his son, he voluntarily and freely surrendered himself to England, to live there in retirement under the protection of British law. His person was in the power of England, but in point of fact it was not then, and never had been of right, in the power of Austria, Russia, Prussia, Spain and Portugal, although all of them were in alliance and making war in conjunction with Great Britain. The convention of the 2nd of August, 1815, could have no force in justice. It was merely the coalition of the four greatest Powers of Europe for the oppression of one man, a coalition which defied the opinion of all peoples, and violated every sound principle of morality.

Napoleon then reviews in turn his relations with the Emperors of Austria and Russia, and the King of Prussia. With regard to the Emperor of Austria, he claims the right of kinship, and asserts that on four several occasions he generously allowed him to keep his throne, and on two occasions graciously restored his capital. As to Alexander, he recalls the treaties of Tilsit and Erfurt, and his magnanimity in allowing him to escape after Austerlitz. He even has the consummate effrontery to claim credit for having incurred personal danger in attempting to quench the fires of Moscow, thus preserving that capital! He tells the King of Prussia that he ought to be very grateful to

him for not having been deposed after Friedland. These princes, he asserts, had reproached him for not having surrendered to one of them. He again enumerates the alleged reasons which prompted him to surrender to England, and the many other courses open to him, all of which having already been fully described, it is unnecessary to repeat. As to the Commissioners, if they were at St. Helena to keep the authorities there in order, well and good, but the Governor had stated that they had neither the right nor the power to express any opinion upon what was done upon that "rock."

He next proceeds to elaborate his denunciations of the island. It had a detestable climate, most prejudicial to his health. Hatred had prompted its selection, as well as the instructions given to its officers. He protested against being styled "General," with the object of compelling him to admit that he had never reigned in France. He had concluded treaties with England as First Consul, and as Emperor had received British Ambassadors, and he had accredited Ambassadors to the English Court. The name of General Bonaparte was doubtless supremely glorious—here he enumerated his victories—but for seventeen years he had borne the title either of First Consul or Emperor. Then he introduces a touch of Liberalism, in his recently assumed rôle of universal liberator of the oppressed. Those, he says, who thought the nations were flocks of sheep who, by right divine, belonged to



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certain privileged families, were not of that century, nor imbued with the spirit of the English Parliament, which had several times changed the dynasty. Kings were merely hereditary magistrates, only existing for the good of the nations, and not the nations for the benefit of kings ; good, wholesome doctrine, no doubt, but scarcely in harmony with his own record, seeing that he had been annexing and parcelling out kingdoms without the slightest regard to the wishes of their peoples. Prussia, Spain, Holland, Portugal and all the other nations over whom he had ridden roughshod, had risen against his intolerable oppression and emancipated themselves from his yoke. It was the revolt of the peoples that had led to his exile in St. Helena, not the oppression of kings.

He then runs over the rest of his wrongs. The censorship over his correspondence, which he pretends prevented him from hearing from his relatives ; the affair of his letter to the Prince Regent ; his inability to enjoy the blessing of reading the *Morning Chronicle* and the *Morning Post*. Recent books denied him ; refusal to deliver certain other books because they were inscribed on the cover "to *Napoléon-le-Grand*." The law, though iniquitous, was founded on his being a prisoner of war, and prisoners of war were never refused any books they asked for. Here it may be repeated, as we have observed before, that Napoleon, although technically a "prisoner of war," was actu-

ally a prisoner of State, confined because it was better that one man should be in durance than that the rest of mankind should be plunged into anarchy, bloodshed and ruin.

Next he dwells on the inaccessibility of St. Helena and the impossibility of escaping from it, so that the limits imposed on his movements were superfluous. He describes in the blackest colours the situation of Longwood, and its discomforts as a residence; nay, its utter unsuitability for human habitation. He complains of the tribulation caused him by the erection of the new buildings, and asserts that there were many delightful houses in the island, including Plantation House, which would have been much more to his taste. (It will be remembered that he had before told the Governor that all he wanted was an executioner and a coffin; and that in any case his camp-bed was enough for him). Communication with the inhabitants had been forbidden. It was as bad as being in Ascension. He ends with a series of personal charges against the Governor, which have already been mentioned.

With respect to the genuineness of Napoleon's complaints about Longwood, one significant fact deserves here to be noted. <sup>1</sup>In order to promote the Emperor's comfort, and secure him a more agreeable residence

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, Forsyth, vol. ii. p. 216.

during the summer months, Sir Hudson approached a Miss Mason, the owner of "Pleasant Mount," one of the most eligible houses in the island, as regards situation, and amply provided with shady plantations and a good supply of water, the alleged absence of which was one of the main complaints made by the exiles against Longwood. The lady expressed her willingness to let the house at £100 per month, and the Governor was prepared to take it. His letter to the "Grand Maréchal," however, acquainting him with the proposed arrangement, remained unanswered !

To Napoleon's letter, which is a monument of *suggestio falsi* and *suppressio veri*, a postscript was added, acknowledging a further letter from the Governor just received. In this missive Lowe had reckoned that a sum of £20,000 per annum would be required to meet the prodigal extravagance of the Longwood *ménage*. The British Government had fixed the allowance at £8,000 per annum, but this the Governor had, on his own responsibility, increased to £12,000, immediately after assuming his duties, an act which speaks volumes for his desire to make things as pleasant as possible for the exiles, and shows the ludicrous injustice of describing him as a cruel and relentless oppressor. Napoleon replies to this remonstrance by stating that it was no concern of himself and his friends ; his table was scarcely supplied with bare necessities ; the food was all of

the very worst quality, and four times dearer than in Paris. As to the Emperor supplementing the expenditure out of his own pocket, he had no money, and having for a year neither written nor received a letter (this was a falsehood), he was in complete ignorance as to what was happening in Europe. Forcibly transported to that "rock" at 2,000 leagues distance, without being able to receive or write a letter (again untrue), he now found himself entirely at the mercy of the English authorities. He had always wished, and still wished, to provide for all his expenses himself, and he would do so conditionally on the abrogation of the order issued to the traders of the island, not to engage in correspondence with him, and the withdrawal of all surveillance over him either by the Governor or his agents. As soon as his wants were known in Europe, his friends would supply the necessary funds.

Lord Bathurst's<sup>1</sup> letter, he went on, which Sir Hudson had sent him, suggested some strange reflections. Did not the English Ministers know that the spectacle of a great man in adversity was the most sublime spectacle of all? Did they not realize that Napoleon at St. Helena, subjected to all kinds of persecutions, which he endured with absolute serenity (this is sublime in its effrontery), was grander, more sacred, more to be revered than when he was seated on the first

<sup>1</sup> Secretary of State for War and the Colonies.

throne in the world, where he was for so long the arbiter of the destinies of kings? Those who, in these circumstances, lacked in respect for Napoleon, only stained their own reputation, and that of the Nation they represented.

We have given the contents of this document at some length because it presents in a complete form the Emperor's whole "case," and is a perfect example of his genius for distorting the plainest facts to his own advantage. For the objects for which it was intended, to further his cause in Europe and damage the Governor, it does not lack ingenuity, and was calculated to produce a temporary effect on those who were not well acquainted with the truth. In these days, however, when all the facts so artfully garbled are fully known, its only use is to serve as an example of the methods originated by Napoleon himself, and since adopted by all his worshippers, to build up the "Napoleonic legend," and deceive the world as to his true character. But the memorial defeats itself—it is too barefaced in its perversions; as, for instance, when it claims gratitude from Alexander for Napoleon's efforts to subdue the flames of Moscow. We know the Emperor acted many parts in his time. He was conqueror, king-maker (and unmaker), law-giver, statesman, jacobin, democrat, autocrat and other things too numerous to mention. But Napoleon as fireman, heroically endeavouring to extinguish the conflagration that was

consuming the ancient capital of the Czars ! No, this, this is too much.

<sup>1</sup> We know, alas ! from the evidence of eye-witnesses that his march through Russia was lurid with the blaze of burning villages, and that so far from endeavouring to subdue the flames of Moscow, his energies were directed solely to escaping with all speed from the Kremlin, and placing himself beyond the reach of danger in the château of Peterskoë.

<sup>1</sup> *Rélation Circonstanciée*, etc., Labaume, p. 212.

## CHAPTER XVI

<sup>1</sup> "L'INTRIGANT LAS CASES"—GOURGAUD.

THE Governor promptly acknowledged the foregoing memorial. He very properly ignored the long catalogue of grievances set forth in the document, which, being mainly directed against the Allied Powers, was no concern of his. What had Sir Hudson to do with Napoleon's relations with the Emperors of Austria and Russia, the capture of Vienna or the treaty of Tilsit? What had he to do even with the convention under which the Emperor had been sent to St. Helena? The one duty of the Governor was to take care that his troublesome captive did not again break loose, and this duty he was determined to fulfil, regardless of the brutal insults it entailed upon him.

As to the Emperor's resolve not to receive any visitors except such as were authorized by the "Grand Maréchal," Sir Hudson replied that he regretted that General Bonaparte should have found himself worried

<sup>1</sup> *Journal Inédit de Sainte Hélène*, Baron Gourgaud, vol. i. chap. 6, p. 292.

by importunate and intrusive callers, and he would at once see that the vexation was stopped.

<sup>1</sup> Among other devices emanating from the fertile brains of the Frenchmen in support of their campaign of calumny, was the allegation that their food was not fit to eat, nor their wine to drink. In fact, it was suggested by them that the diet was designed to shorten the Emperor's life. That all this was a deliberate fabrication is shown by the description already given of the Longwood cuisine. It was, however, a capital idea, sure to go down well in Europe, and in order to "give verisimilitude to an otherwise bald and unconvincing narrative," it was agreed that the Emperor should begin to sell his plate, a solid proof that he was driven to the last extremity to save himself from starvation. This news, of course, was duly conveyed to Europe to arouse indignation at the cruelty of England, and sympathy for her hapless victim, and to supply the Whig Opposition with fresh weapons against their political opponents.

That this enforced plate-selling was simply a "put-up job," there is ample evidence, which will be given later on. <sup>2</sup> When the third lot had been sacrificed, Lowe expressed his regret when he heard of it, and we are informed that "he plainly showed how much

<sup>1</sup> *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, vol. iii. part 6, p. 137, etc.

<sup>2</sup> *Lowe Papers*, Forsyth, vol. i. p. 363.



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afraid he was of blame from his Government, and said that he would send next day to the Cape of Good Hope, where he hoped to procure a suitable service." The Emperor manifested great pleasure at this, and remarked, "As to Bertrand, I am sorry he has only crockery. *It was his advice I followed.*" The whole thing was plainly a move in the general campaign against Lowe and the British Ministry, every step in which was taken after careful deliberations among the Longwood conspirators. In fact, whatever time they could spare from their eternal round of eating and drinking, and quarrelling among themselves, was devoted to the concoction of some new device for annoying the Governor and discrediting his masters. Thus does Satan always find "some mischief still for idle hands to do."

<sup>1</sup> On the 1st of October, 1816, the Governor notified the Emperor that he wished to see him in order to acquaint him with the instructions recently received from London. Napoleon replied that he was ill, and must ask the Governor to impart the information through one of his officers. Sir Hudson pressed his demand for a personal interview, adding that he desired to discuss the matter with "the General." "The General" having repeated his refusal, the Governor withdrew, saying that he would be glad to know when the

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires de Ste. Hélène*, vol. iii. part 6, p. 231.

audience could take place. The Emperor vowed that he would never receive him again.

<sup>1</sup> Foiled in his attempt to see Napoleon himself, the Governor sent for the "Grand Maréchal" to Plantation House, and informed him of the instructions received from England. Sir Hudson expressed the desirability of reducing the redundant household at Longwood, and finally decided to get rid of the Pole, Capt. Poniontkowski, and three servants. Bertrand informed his friends, however, that Las Cases was considered quite the most dangerous and objectionable of the whole group; and with good reason, as he had always displayed an ostentatious attitude of hostility, and had made himself prominent as an inveterate enemy of Lowe. He began this conduct, indeed, from the very first. It will be remembered that when a "declaration" had been required from all the members of the suite on the Governor's arrival at St. Helena, Las Cases had sent in his, couched in highly insolent and provocative terms, and it will not be inopportune to give now the text of this foolish and impolitic document.

<sup>2</sup> "*Declaration*. I, the undersigned, repeat the declaration which I made at Plymouth, that I desire

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 242.

<sup>2</sup> *Mémorial de Sté. Hélène*, vol. ii. part 3, p. 65.

to link myself with the destinies of the Emperor Napoleon ; to accompany and follow him in order to mitigate, to the utmost of my power, the unjust treatment to which he has been subjected by an unparalleled violation of human rights, which is all the more distressing to me, seeing that it was I who conveyed to him the offer of Captain Maitland of the *Bellerophon*, and his assurance that he had orders to receive the Emperor and his suite under the protection of the British flag, if that would be agreeable to him, and to conduct him to England.

“The letter of the Emperor Napoleon to the Prince Regent (known to all England), which I communicated in advance to Captain Maitland, without his making the least remark, proves to the world, better than anything I can say, that the Emperor freely and voluntarily accepted this proffered hospitality, and that he has in consequence been made the dupe of his confidence and good faith.

“To-day, in spite of my experience of the horrors of a sojourn in the Island of St. Helena, so prejudicial to the health of the Emperor, and all Europeans, and although during the six months we have been in the island I have endured every kind of privation, to which I myself add every day in order to avoid as much as possible a lapse of the respect to which my rank and habits entitle me ; ever firm in my sentiments, and determined henceforth that no apprehension

of evil, or hope of good shall separate me from the Emperor Napoleon, I repeat my desire to reside with him, submitting myself to the restrictions which may arbitrarily be imposed upon me.”

This document was in itself a declaration of war. It repeated the false charge against the English Government of having entrapped Napoleon into a surrender by false pretences, and very naturally those responsible for the detention of the Emperor felt bound to watch very carefully a man who had revealed this bitter animus. Moreover Las Cases was the only inmate of Longwood who was well versed in the English language, which he could both read and write fluently. He had passed fourteen years in England, and had formed intimate relations there, and was in frequent correspondence with his English friends. It was he who was the active spirit in getting libels on the Governor and gross falsehoods about the Emperor’s treatment through to London, where the venomous scribes of the Whig Party and its factious representatives in Parliament turned them to good, or rather bad, account.

In order fully to appreciate the mischief which a man like Las Cases could do in these circumstances, it will be well to consider the position of affairs in England at this particular period.

The Tory Party was in office. Whatever one’s views

may be as to the subsequent policy of that Party, impartial men must admit that it saved the Nation at a supreme crisis of its fate. Even Byron, who very absurdly posed as a democrat, was in a moment of candour forced to "venerate our recent glories, and wish they were not owing to the Tories." By a timely postponement of internal reforms, and a salutary suspension of the Constitution, they had averted from England the revolutionary horrors which had devastated France. There was a numerous faction in this country, led by Fox and Sheridan, who were in strong sympathy with the French Republicans, and were in close correspondence with them. This faction, after they had emancipated themselves from the influence of Burke and all the most illustrious Whigs of the day, proceeded to the verge of treason in their attacks upon the British Ministry, and made no concealment of their design completely to revolutionize the Constitution on French lines. They found themselves foiled by the splendid patriotism of Burke, and the firmness of the Government, kept to the level of their duty by the consummate genius of that illustrious man. To the frenzy of the Jacobins succeeded the glamour of Bonaparte's military prowess, and the degenerate Whigs, whose factious hatred of their political foes had been inflamed to the point of madness by their past failure, transferred all their enthusiasm to this new enemy of their country. They exhausted their

pervverted ingenuity in finding expedients to thwart the Government in carrying on the stupendous struggle. They singled out Wellington for their special abuse, and transcended the bounds of common decency in their attacks upon him, while he was with iron determination driving the French, step by step, out of the Peninsula. In the Corporation of London, then a nest of Whiggery, his recall was demanded—that same Corporation which afterwards presented him with a sword of honour, when, in spite of them, he had emerged triumphant as the saviour of Europe. When the arch-disturber of the peace of the world was at last stricken down, they abandoned him as a hero, to exalt him as a martyr; and in their newspapers falsely held him up to the sympathy of mankind as a man who had first been entrapped and afterwards oppressed. To carry out this new plot against the welfare not only of their own country but of the whole of Europe, they received with avidity and published broadcast every item of unauthentic gossip sent home by the Longwood conspirators. Without verification, without even inquiry, they accepted all the fables which were concocted in that centre of intrigue, to injure the fair fame of England, and glorify her inveterate foe.

There was another danger against which the Government had to guard. The British are a generous people. They are erroneously supposed to be unemotional,

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whereas they have shown themselves on occasion one of the most emotional nations in history. What is known as the "sporting instinct," the spirit of "fair play," is one of their most pleasing attributes. They dislike "hitting below the belt," or "kicking a man when he is down"; and even in the most brutal of their sports like to give the quarry "law." This golden vein the Whigs, with consummate skill, worked for all it was worth in the case of Napoleon Bonaparte. His letter to the Prince Regent, manifestly written for that very purpose, made an appeal to the generous instincts of the British People. He had been for twenty years their inveterate foe. At last they had beaten him, and was it not in accordance with the ethics of the prize-ring, then very popular in England, for the two gladiators to shake hands and make friends at the close of a fight?

There can be no doubt that if the Ministry could have seen their way to releasing Napoleon the act would have been extremely popular with the multitude. But there are times when the rulers of a State must ignore the wishes of the mass, who are frequently unable to see their own true interests, and allow their generous emotions to override the plain dictates of reason and common sense. The Ministry saw their duty clearly. They wisely declined to obtain a passing popularity by incurring a terrible risk. They knew only too well that if Napoleon once established himself, uncontrolled,

either in Europe or America, the world would be embroiled in intrigues, which, even if they never materialized, would keep open a running sore of unrest and apprehension in the whole body politic. Besides, they were bound by solemn treaty with the Allied Powers, as whose mandatories they were acting.

They saw, however, the danger involved in the active Bonapartist agitation, which, fed by falsehoods from St. Helena, had its ramifications in all parts of the world. Worked upon by those cunning concoctions, the British people might get out of hand, and it was therefore the bounden duty of the Government to do all in its power to cut off the supply at the source. All the measures taken to this end were in our opinion not only justifiable but imperatively necessary.

It is easy enough in these days, separated by nearly a century from that time of national danger, for poets and poetesses and other neurotic persons to condemn the want of "chivalry" displayed by English statesmen to their fallen foe. Those who had lived through Austerlitz, Jena, Friedland, Moscow and Trafalgar, and in whose ears the thunder of the guns at Waterloo may be said to have been still reverberating, are not to be judged in that way. They only did what was their plain duty. They pursued the only policy that could have secured beyond all doubt the general permanent peace of the world.

These considerations make it obvious that a person



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of Las Cases' antecedents and connections was a very undesirable member of Napoleon's household, and it is not to be wondered at that he was, as we shall presently see, the first to be removed from the island.

## CHAPTER XVII

### NAPOLEON'S IGNORANCE OF ENGLAND

AS we have arrested the course of our narrative to consider the position of affairs in 'England at the period of which we write, it may not be out of place to glance for a moment at Napoleon's ideas of England, especially as it was his ignorance of our country and the character of its inhabitants that mainly led to his downfall. His outlook was so entirely foreign to the spirit of the English people that he utterly failed to understand the motives which lay at the root of their obstinate and unbending resistance to his power. This appears very strongly in some remarks he made at St. Helena on the policy which was adopted by the British Ministry at the general settlement of 1815.

<sup>1</sup> "After twenty years of war," said the Emperor, "after such an enormous expenditure of treasure, such immense subsidies contributed to the common cause, after a triumph beyond all expectations, what has

<sup>1</sup> *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, vol. iii. part 6, p. 81, etc.

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England gained? Castlereagh had the whole Continent at his feet; what great advantages, what equitable recompense has he obtained for his country? He has made peace as if he had been vanquished. I could not have treated him worse had I been victorious. Two powerful motives prompted England during the struggle—the national interest and hatred of me. In the moment of triumph the violence of the one should have obliterated the other. Thousands of years will elapse before such an opportunity will occur again for securing the welfare—the true greatness of England. Was it Castlereagh's corruption or ignorance? He has distributed the spoils with open hand to the sovereigns of the Continent, and has reserved nothing for his own country, and runs the risk of being accused as their creature rather than their ally. He has given away immense territories. Russia, Prussia, and Austria have gained millions of new population. Where do we find England's equivalent? She, who nevertheless was the soul of the struggle; she who had borne all the cost, and is already reaping the fruit of Continental gratitude. My Continental system is being continued; her manufactures are excluded, while she might have insisted that free and independent seaports should have lined the coasts—such as Dantzic, Hamburg, Antwerp, Dunkirk, Genoa and others—which would have been the *entrepôts* of her manufactures, with which she could have flooded Europe in spite of all the custom-houses

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in the world. She had the right and the need of doing this ; her demands would have been just, and who could have prevented her at the moment of victory ? Why create for herself an embarrassment, and in time a natural enemy, by uniting Belgium and Holland, when she might have secured two great outlets for her commerce by keeping them apart ? Holland, which has no manufactures, was the natural market for those of England ; and Belgium, as an English colony, under an English prince, would have been the gate through which she could have poured her goods into France and Germany. Why were not Spain and Portugal bound to her by a treaty of commerce for a long term of years, which would have amply recouped her for the enormous cost of their deliverance, and which could have been obtained under the threat of setting free their Colonies ? Why were no advantages exacted in the Baltic and the various States of Italy ? After having struggled so long for the supremacy of the seas, why fail to insist upon its benefits when they were hers by the force of events ? Was it due to the fear that while approving the usurpation of others, hers might be refused ? If so, who could have opposed her ? She may even now regret her policy when too late. But she has missed the psychological moment, and it will never return. Castlereagh is the only man who could have acted thus ; he has been the tool of the Holy Alliance, and future ages will curse him. The Lauder-

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dales, the Grenvilles, the Wellesleys and others would have taken a very different course, because they would have shown themselves patriots."

The fact is that Napoleon judged England by his own standard. He could not conceive of statesmen acting from any other motive than either to acquire riches and glory for themselves, or territory for their country. England maintained the struggle against Napoleon, not from a desire for territorial expansion, but for the preservation of her national existence; for she knew that if Europe were welded into one homogeneous empire under Napoleon's rule, her national existence would not be worth many years' purchase. The British people valued above all other earthly things their insular independence; their venerable laws, and their glorious language. They had no fancy for becoming a mere appanage of an imperial system, the centre of which would be Paris, with London reduced to the level of a provincial town. The common and statute law of England was good enough for them, and they preferred it to all the cut-and-dried symmetry of the Code Napoléon. It was because they were determined to preserve this glorious inheritance, derived from their forefathers, that they never rested until they had brought the French Colossus to his knees.

The British people had also learnt that their independence could only be secured by their supremacy

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on the seas, and if they had gained nothing else by the tremendous struggle, this one achievement amply repaid them for all the blood they had shed and the treasure they had lavished. The really decisive battle of the Napoleonic wars was Trafalgar and not Waterloo. Nelson's victory settled the question of maritime supremacy. It sealed the fate of the French in Spain, and the liberation of the Peninsula lit up a fire of patriotism which blazed across Europe from Lisbon to Moscow, and consumed Napoleon's system in its flames.

The lesson then learnt has never been forgotten. To remain supreme upon the ocean, no matter from what quarter that supremacy may be menaced, is still the settled purpose of the British race. It is the one question before which party divisions disappear, or rather in respect of which there is only one party—the entire nation.

Having achieved this great result by her twenty years of warfare, and having removed to a distance of 2,000 leagues the man who threatened her national existence, England could afford with good-humoured indifference to throw to her allies the débris of the Napoleonic Empire.

Napoleon, that "great self-seeker, trampling on the right," was utterly unable to understand the reasons for England's undying hostility to him and his schemes. With him "glory" and personal ambition were the

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only objects to be pursued, and in their pursuit he was utterly indifferent to the means he adopted, whether it was the effusion of oceans of blood or the most unscrupulous trickery and duplicity.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE NEW "DECLARATION"

THE new instructions which, as we have said, had been received by the Governor, and explained by him to the exiles through the "Grand Maréchal," varied in several respects from those previously in force, and made it necessary to exact a fresh "declaration" from each of the suite to conform to the new regulations. This may appear on the face of it a superfluous requirement, but it must be remembered that the Longwood *côterie* had by now manifested their aggressive hostility not only to the British Government but to the Governor himself, and had shown their malignant ingenuity for manufacturing causes of complaint. It was, therefore, quite likely that they might have resisted the new rules on the pretext that they had only agreed to be bound by the old, and it was to meet this contingency that another declaration of acceptance was required of them.

<sup>1</sup> The document was couched in the following terms :—

<sup>1</sup> *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, vol. iii. part 6, p. 278.



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“I, the undersigned, hereby declare that it is my wish to remain in the Island of St. Helena, and to participate in the restrictions imposed upon General Bonaparte, personally.”

These restrictions consisted of a definition of the limits within which the Emperor would be allowed free movement; the placing of sentinels at points beyond which no person would be allowed to approach the house or garden of Longwood without the permission of the Governor; the notification of the officer-in-charge of Napoleon's intention to go beyond certain places when taking exercise on horseback; it was added that no obstacle would be put in his way, provided this notification were given. If Napoleon desired to extend his walks in any other direction, he must be accompanied by an officer of the Governor's staff, or if there was not time to arrange this, then the officer attached to Longwood would undertake this duty. The regulations already in force to prevent communications with all persons whatsoever without the Governor's permission, must be strictly observed; Napoleon must therefore abstain from entering any house, or engaging in conversation with any one he might encounter, except in the presence of a British officer. All persons who, with the consent of Napoleon, might receive permits from the Governor to visit him, must, notwithstanding such permission, refrain from communicating

with any member of the suite, unless the permit expressly allowed it. At sunset the boundaries of the garden of Longwood would be considered to constitute the limits, and at that hour sentries would be placed around it, but so as not to inconvenience Napoleon, by watching his person, should he desire to continue his promenade after that hour. During the night the sentries were to be placed close to the house, as was the custom formerly, and all admission would be prevented until the sentries were withdrawn from the house and garden next morning. All letters for Longwood to be placed by the Governor in a sealed envelope, and sent to the officer on duty, to be delivered unopened to the officer of Napoleon's suite to whom it was addressed, so that the recipient could be assured that no person other than the Governor knew its contents.

These regulations will no doubt appear stringent and severe, and so no doubt they were. But in considering them we must remember the circumstances in which they originated. They were based upon the principle laid down by the British Ministry when it was first decided to ensure the permanent peace of the world by sending Napoleon to St. Helena. The Emperor was to be treated with all the indulgence that might be consistent with the absolute security of his person. When he was first established on the island comparative freedom was allowed him ; but when it was discovered

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that he had declared war to the knife with the British Government and its representative, and that his interviews with visitors were perverted to the dissemination of all sorts of falsehoods, with the object of fomenting an agitation in Europe, and that libels and slanders were being smuggled out of the island with the same design, the situation was materially altered, and drastic measures had to be taken to put a stop to the nuisance. The consummate ability with which Napoleon deluded his visitors into the belief that he was the victim of perfidy and oppression, and the malign activity of Las Cases in spreading the same delusion through his English connections, left the Government no alternative but to take the most decided steps to nip this conspiracy in the bud. Hence it was that the original regulations had to be modified, and another code substituted for them; but the responsibility for its increased severity must rest upon Napoleon and his suite, whose conduct had made it absolutely necessary.

<sup>1</sup>The exiles held a conclave to consider their line of action in face of this new *méchanceté*—whether to follow the example of the illustrious Pistol, after most horribly swearing, and sign the document, or as an alternative, suffer expulsion from the island. The Emperor, “indignant at the vexations with which they had already been overwhelmed on his account,” urged

<sup>1</sup> *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, vol. iii. part 6, p. 281.

them rather to abandon him than to submit, and to return to Europe to bear witness to the "living tomb" to which they had found themselves consigned. It is a pity that they did not persist in their refusal, as a break-up of the *côterie* would have greatly simplified the duty of the British Government and their agent, and would doubtless have made it possible to relax somewhat the restrictions, which, in existing circumstances, they were reluctantly compelled to impose upon Napoleon.

However, they finally decided to sign the declaration, substituting in it, however, the words "the Emperor Napoleon" for those of "General Bonaparte." As this would have been, on the Governor's part, a recognition of the title which he was specifically instructed not to recognize in any shape or form, the declarations were returned, with a request that they should be sent in exactly in the terms drawn up by him.

<sup>1</sup>It is needless to say that this created a veritable explosion of rage in the French camp, and the Emperor delivered himself on the matter as follows. "The outrages to which those who are around me are daily subjected, and which, it seems, are to be redoubled in future, constitute a spectacle which I am unable longer to endure. You must leave me; I cannot bear that you should submit yourselves to such restrictions. I prefer to remain alone. Go, then, to Europe, where you will publish the odious methods adopted towards me;

<sup>1</sup> *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, vol. iii. part 6, p. 281.

and proclaim how you have seen me descending alive into the grave. Not only do I not wish you to sign this declaration, but I forbid you to do so. . . . If they expel you for refusing to comply with such an idiotic formality, they are capable, later on, of doing so for even a more frivolous reason. They want to get rid of you one by one. I prefer that you should go *en masse*; for perhaps there may be advantage to be gained by such a course."

Great advantage, unquestionably; first in ridding himself of his quarrelsome friends, whose jealousies, as we have seen, poisoned his existence; and next, in letting loose in Europe a band of fanatical apostles, who should preach a Napoleonic crusade with all the fervour and frenzy of Peter the Hermit.

<sup>1</sup> However, the conference was interrupted by the announcement that the Governor was at Bertrand's house, about fifty yards from Longwood, where he requested the pleasure of an interview with the members of the suite. The "Grand Maréchal" saw the Governor *tête-à-tête*, and refused to sign the declaration; he conveyed an intimation that Sir Hudson would prefer to see the other three together. Las Cases, however, presented himself alone.

<sup>2</sup> He had understood that the Governor was much incensed with him, and arrived therefore with all his

<sup>1</sup> *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, vol. iii. part 6, p. 284.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 285,

war-paint on. But, to his surprise, Sir Hudson conducted him, with marked politeness, into an inner chamber, leaving the officers of his suite in an anteroom. Here Lowe told him that he would await the arrival of de Montholon and Gourgaud; but on Las Cases asking him if he had any objection to discussing matters with him in private, the Governor replied that he had none in the world, and the conversation proceeded. Lowe asked Las Cases if he was aware of the decision taken by Bertrand, to which the Count replied that he was, and that he intended to make the same answer. He could not, continued he, understand why so much importance was attached to a mere formality, which was as distasteful to them as it appeared useless to the Government. "It is not in my power," replied the Governor, "to make the alteration you desire. I am instructed to require your signature to the document, exactly as I have written it, and I, as an English officer, cannot therefore agree to vary it in accordance with your wishes." Las Cases rejoined that he was not aware of this fact; Lowe, as an Englishman, was obliged to exact this condition; he as a Frenchman, must sign the declaration in his language, that is, he must translate it. Let the Governor dictate the phrase to which he (Las Cases) must affix his signature, and he would do his best to render it in French. "Observe," said the Count, "how perfectly frank I am, and form your own opinion as to whether I wish to create em-

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barrassments." The Governor, we are told, seemed much struck with this idea. Las Cases then dwelt upon the distress occasioned to the suite by what was, after all, a quibble over words. To insist would make their position frightful (*affreuse*). It would drive them to veritable despair. To separate from the Emperor would be worse than death, but could he, on the other hand, degrade him by his own act? Sir Hudson, who by this time must have reached the limit of his patience, seeing that no amount of argument could relieve him from the necessity of carrying out his instructions, here with some asperity referred to the gross ill-treatment he himself had been subjected to, and observed that he recognized no title to respect except the possession of moral qualities. "In that case," energetically replied the Count, "the Emperor could with safety discard all his titles, and would gain thereby the right to be treated by all the Universe on that basis." For some time longer Las Cases continued his expostulations; the Governor listened to him patiently, making but few remarks, and then terminated the interview.

De Montholon and Gourgaud then had their turn, after which the Emperor was informed of what had occurred, when he repeated in substance what he had previously said.

<sup>1</sup> While the whole party were discussing the state of

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires de Ste. Hélène*, vol. iii. part 6, p. 289.

affairs in the garden, two strangers appeared close at hand. The Emperor sent to know who they were, and they proved to belong to a ship which was sailing next day for Europe. The Emperor inquired which of the authorities they would see on arriving in London, and on the reply being Lord Bathurst, he seized the golden opportunity of asking them to deliver the following message to his lordship :

"Tell him that I am being treated abominably by his orders, and that he has here an agent who fulfils them to the letter. If he intends to rid himself of me, he had better despatch me at once, and not kill me by inches. Nothing could be more barbarous. There is nothing English in all this. I attribute it to a few individuals. I esteem the Prince Regent, the bulk of the Ministry and the British nation too much to hold them responsible. However, come what may, my body alone is in the power of evil men ; my soul reigns supreme ; even from the depths of a dungeon it can soar to Heaven."

It is not known whether his lordship ever received this bombastic communication, which was, in any case, not likely to make much impression on the British War Office, or materially alter the determination of the Allied Powers to keep Napoleon out of mischief.

<sup>1</sup> That evening, during dinner, the Governor informed the "Grand Maréchal" by letter that in view of the

<sup>1</sup> *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, vol. iii. part 6, p. 290.



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general refusal to sign the declaration, he would at once give orders for the immediate removal of every member of the suite to Europe.

This produced a wonderful effect. The declaration was at once signed by Las Cases, de Montholon and Gourgaud, and sent post-haste to the Governor through the British officer on duty at Longwood, while a letter to Bertrand informed that dignity of the unconditional surrender.

<sup>1</sup> In his *Voice from St. Helena*, O'Meara gives a very brief description of this scene. He says the ultimatum produced great grief and consternation among the inmates of Longwood, who, without the knowledge of Napoleon, waited on Captain Poppleton (the officer on duty at Longwood) after midnight, and signed the obnoxious paper—with the exception of Santini, who vowed he would never do so, because it did not describe Napoleon as “the Emperor.”

But now let us see how the veracious surgeon describes the occurrence to his fidus Achates, Finlaison. Writing with his accustomed frankness, on the 23rd of December, 1816, he says :

“This threw them into the greatest consternation, and notwithstanding all the vapouring of the morning, and assertions of honour before life, accompanied by gestures, such as baring their bosoms, and protesting that a dagger should be passed through hearts, faith-

<sup>1</sup> *A Voice from St. Helena*, O'Meara, vol. i. p. 155.

ful even in death, and which, even in the last agonies, would vibrate only for the Emperor, ere they would sign his degradation, Messrs. Las Cases and Gourgaud came into Poppleton's room in the dead of night, with crest-fallen countenances, streaming eyes, and the declarations, signed, in their hands, imploring him to send them at that unseasonable hour of the night to the Governor, so much had the fear of being sent away bewildered their intellects. Next morning at five, de Montholon went in to Poppleton again, begging him to hurry the documents away, fancying every moment that he saw an officer and party in the road to bundle them on board the ship."

This highly-coloured and very ill-natured description would appear to be a gross exaggeration, as Captain Poppleton's account of the affair is very different, containing nothing about the hysterical display made by the exiles. It is only significant of the despicable behaviour of O'Meara, who, while posing as the affectionate friend of Napoleon and his suite, was thus lampooning them in his private correspondence, and shows what credit should be attached to his subsequent libels on the Governor.

As a conclusion to this affair, Napoleon sent the following "Note" to the Governor :

<sup>1</sup> "I am informed that in the course of the conversation between General Lowe and several of my

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoires de Ste. Hélène*, vol. iii. part 6, p. 300.

suite, things were said which do not accord with my ideas. I placed my abdication in the hands of the national representatives in favour of my son. I sought refuge in England, in the full confidence that I should be allowed to live there, or in America, in complete retirement, and under the name of one of my colonels who was killed by my side, determined to remain aloof from all political affairs of any description whatever.

“On my arrival on board the *Northumberland*, I was told I was a prisoner of war, that I was to be transported to the other side of the line, and that I was to be styled General Bonaparte. I have a right to bear openly my title of Emperor Napoleon, in opposition to the title of General Bonaparte, which it is sought to foist upon me.

“Seven or eight months ago the Count de Montholon proposed to avoid certain trifling difficulties which were continually arising by adopting some ordinary name. The Admiral considered it his duty to refer the question to London, and there the matter rests.

“I am now given a name which has this advantage, that it does not falsify the past, but it is not in accordance with the usages of Society. I am at all times willing to assume a name which conforms to ordinary custom, and I repeat that when it is deemed fit to terminate this cruel exile, I desire to remain a complete stranger to politics, no matter what occurs in the world.

That is my idea. Anything said to the contrary is opposed to the truth."

The fatal defect of this document is that the statements contained in it are not true. So far from it having been the writer's intention to abstain entirely from politics, we have shown, from his own utterances at St. Helena, the course he had marked out for himself in the event of his being allowed to live either in England or in the United States. His residence was to be made a centre of intrigue, whence an agitation was to be carried on against the order of things established at the peace of 1815. The Powers of Europe knew their man well, after twenty years' experience, and how impossible it was that such a daring, restless spirit should ever settle down into peaceful obscurity. His own words have proved to posterity the inexorable necessity of the policy adopted with regard to him.

Before leaving the subject of the "Declaration," it will be as well to consider the conduct of Napoleon's suite in that connection. Their case differs entirely from that of Napoleon himself. He had been compulsorily segregated at St. Helena owing to the imperative necessity of securing the peace of the world; and he was therefore under no obligation to acquiesce in his detention or to abstain from attempts to escape. On the other hand, his attendants had gone into voluntary exile. At their own request the British Government permitted them to accompany their master to

the island ; but only on certain conditions, embodied in the Declaration, which each of them had signed. They were at perfect liberty either to remain in Europe, or to go to St. Helena on the promise faithfully to observe the regulations laid down for ensuring the great object—the safe custody of the Emperor's person. Having deliberately made their choice, with full knowledge and acceptance of the conditions, it is difficult to reconcile their subsequent conduct with any code of honour. They were essentially on *parole*, and it is recognized that the breaking of *parole* reflects dishonour on him who is guilty of it. The course pursued by Napoleon's suite was one consistent violation of their signed undertaking, and convicts them of a dishonourable contravention of their written pledge, upon the faith of which they were alone permitted to share their master's exile.

## CHAPTER XIX

### LAS CASES

THE time is now approaching when we shall have to take leave of Las Cases; and the rest of our narrative will be based upon other sources of information. It is as well, therefore, to sum up the charges which he brings against the Governor, and see how much substance there is in them. We say advisedly against the Governor himself, for the purpose of this work is not so much to vindicate the action of the British Government in their treatment of Napoleon (though in that respect we have shown how entirely justified it was by the circumstances of the case), but to clear Sir Hudson Lowe's memory from the cruel and unfounded slanders with which it has been sought to besmirch it. Fortunately, in his *Journal*, Las Cases has himself given this summary, which, of course, presents the case for the object of his idolatry as favourably as possible, and seeks to blacken to the utmost the conduct of the Governor.

He starts with a falsehood. "It has been seen," he writes, "that the advent of the new Governor was for

us the beginning of a sinister existence." As a matter of fact, nothing of the sort has been seen. Before Sir Hudson appeared, the policy of provocation had already been agreed upon and put into operation against Admiral Cockburn. Las Cases himself describes the studied politeness displayed by Lowe towards him on their first meeting, and we have seen how the Governor, from his first interview with Napoleon, manifested an evidently sincere desire to get on as good terms with his captive as their relative positions would permit, and how all his advances were repulsed. The insults hurled at the Governor by Napoleon went on in a continual crescendo of brutality at each successive interview, in spite of the patience and forbearance with which Sir Hudson met them. All this is on the record of Las Cases himself. He charges the Governor with striking terror into the inhabitants of the island in regard to their relations with the exiles—those inhabitants who, on the termination of Lowe's governorship, presented him with an address of thanks for his beneficent rule. He complains that the Governor forbade correspondence, which is a *suggestio falsi*, for correspondence was permitted under certain regulations imposed by the British Government. He accuses him of inviting Napoleon to dinner as General Bonaparte, with the object of exhibiting him to a lady of quality who was visiting the island; a malevolent interpretation of the Governor's motives, which discloses the animus of a mind in search

of a grievance. The rest of the charges are as follows :  
“ On the authority of a despatch dragging the Emperor down into the mud,” to discuss household matters with him ; worrying him to provide money which he did not possess to meet some of the reckless expenditure at Longwood, and compelling him to sell his plate to a buyer and at a price fixed by the Governor ; limiting the household to a bottle of wine a day, and including the Emperor in the restriction ; enforcing the most outrageous limits to the Emperor’s movements in the island ; digging ditches and erecting palisades and “ redouts ” (*sic*) around Longwood ; compelling the signing of the declaration under pain of immediate expulsion from St. Helena.

Of these charges some are palpably false, some partially so, some gross exaggerations, some fantastic, and for most of them Sir Hudson was not personally responsible. Those that are absolutely false are the “ terror-striking ” matter ; the compulsory sale of the plate, which was a transparent dodge of Napoleon to give colour to the charge of a deliberate attempt to starve him. Clearly, the plate need not have been sold, if he had brought his household expenses within reasonable limits, besides which it will be seen later that he was at that very time in possession of ample resources. The charge which is partially false is the prohibition of correspondence ; the exaggeration is to be found in the digging of ditches and the erection of palisades and



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“redouts.” There were no “redouts” erected near Longwood. It is in the last degree fantastic to ground a complaint on the Governor’s desire to discuss household matters with Napoleon. What else was he to do ? The British Government had, through Lowe’s action, raised the subsidy allotted to the support of the exiles from £8,000 to £12,000 per annum. Lowe had to work with that sum at his disposal—he could get no more. He found that £20,000 would be barely sufficient to cover the cost of the household, and was forced to discuss ways and means with Napoleon accordingly. He had to account for his management to his Government, who would naturally want to know where all this money was going to. In any case, the complaints, with the one exception of the Governor’s desire to discuss ways and means, should have been made, if at all, against the British Government, and not urged as acts of oppression against the Governor himself.

And now let us see what Sir Hudson had to complain of on his side. Here, also, Las Cases saves us the trouble of sifting the matter out ourselves, for he has catalogued the Emperor’s abuse with evident approval and satisfaction, quite unconscious, apparently, that he thereby damns his idol’s case.

Apparently unable to describe the simplest facts without falling into inaccuracy, he says: “The Emperor, goaded to extremes by such ignoble treatment, and so many gratuitous “*méchancetés*,” expressed

himself without reserve to Sir Hudson Lowe himself. Now, we have already shown that before the Governor had time for "*méchanceté*," indeed immediately after his first interview with his captive, Napoleon declared war, and soon afterwards began those brutal insults which Las Cases covers up with the euphemism "without reserve." It is therefore quite obvious which of the two men was guilty of "*méchancetés*." However, here is a recapitulation of some of Napoleon's choice phrases, as given by Las Cases :—

"The worst thing the English Government have done is not in sending me here, but in having placed me in your power."

"I had reason to complain of the Admiral, your predecessor, but at all events he had a heart."

"You disgrace your nation and your name will be blasted."

"This Governor has nothing of the Englishman about him ; he is only a rascally Sicilian police spy."

"I complained at first that they had sent me a gaoler, but I now find they have sent me a hangman."

To which Las Cases adds a significant etc., etc. The reader will appreciate the propriety of this addendum in view of the inadequacy of Las Cases' examples of his master's billingsgate.

Before proceeding to trace the circumstances which led to Las Cases' expulsion from St. Helena, a brief sketch of his career may not be out of place.

N

<sup>1</sup> On the outbreak of the Revolution, as a member of the old French *noblesse*, Las Cases naturally found himself on the royalist side. He was then in his twenty-first year, and was at that period a lieutenant in the French navy. He fled from France at the time of the general emigration of the nobility, and spent some years in England, until the amnesty granted by the First Consul at the treaty of Amiens enabled him to return to France. Shortly afterwards monarchy was restored under the imperial régime, and the astonishing victories of Austerlitz, Jena and Friedland; the treaties of Presburg and of Tilsit intoxicated France with glory and made her the mistress of Europe. Secured on his throne by this succession of triumphs, Napoleon gathered round him all the members of the old nobility whom he could induce to accept monarchy in its new form. A brilliant career was thus suddenly opened to men who had shortly before been ruined fugitives from their fatherland, and who had either found themselves in the service of foreigners, fighting against their country, or reduced to the direst expedients to eke out a miserable existence. Las Cases had been one of the more fortunate of these exiles, for he had discovered a mine of wealth in his *Historical Atlas*, and having arrived in England with seven louis in his pocket, returned to France with several thousand pounds. The glamour of Napoleon's fame, and the apparent hopelessness of

<sup>1</sup> *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, vol. i. part 1, p. 2, etc.

the Bourbon cause, decided him. He resolved to accept the new order, and aflame with the ambition of sharing in such glories, he joined the French army at Flushing as a volunteer. He was appointed chamberlain to the Emperor, and remained faithful to him afterwards. During the exile at Elba he kept quiet, and offered his services on Napoleon's return to Paris.

<sup>1</sup> Las Cases was of diminutive stature, scarcely exceeding five feet in height, and his mind appears to have been fitted to his physique. His motives in accompanying Napoleon to St. Helena were largely compounded of vanity and self-interest. To have remained in Europe after the Bourbon restoration would have been to doom himself to obscurity, for as an apostate royalist, he could have hoped for no consideration under the new régime. On the other hand, to identify himself with the ex-Emperor in his exile was to draw the eyes of the world upon him; and possessing as he did a considerable literary talent, it offered him the prospect of distinction and profit as an author. He had, as we have said, already made a hit and a good deal of money out of his *Historical Atlas*, and no doubt golden visions presented themselves to his mind as the Boswell of his imperial Johnson. The eagerness which he subsequently displayed to get out of the island after he had acquired all that was worth gleaning from his loquacious master, shows that

<sup>1</sup> *The Surrender of Napoleon*, Maitland, p. 227.

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his pretence of undying fidelity and heroic self-sacrifice was to a large extent bunkum. Napoleon soon began to repeat himself in his fanciful narrations of his career, and Las Cases, as soon as his budget of notes was full, was probably anxious to put them into profitable shape before the subject grew stale. His persistent trickiness and mendacity show him to have been entirely devoid of a sense of honour, and not at all of the stuff of which martyrs are made.

## CHAPTER XX

### EXIT LAS CASES

**W**E now come to the events which led to the removal of Las Cases from St. Helena.

He had all along taken a leading part in hostility to the Governor, and had been the foremost in sending defamatory and mendacious communications to Europe. The others, indeed, had restricted their letters to domestic concerns and matters of a trivial character. It was therefore only right and proper that the authorities should keep a sharp look-out on his proceedings.

<sup>1</sup> In the middle of November, 1816, the Governor had received a warning that a mulatto named James Scott, who had been engaged as a servant by the Count, was a person of suspicious character, and had been employed by him to carry an important letter to the Baroness Sturmer, the wife of the Austrian Commissioner. She told her husband, who, of course, at once informed Sir Hudson. Finding that Las Cases had engaged this man without the sanction of Admiral

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, Forsyth, vol. i. p. 367, etc.

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Cockburn, the Governor resolved to remove him, but gave the Count the choice of another servant. Las Cases, however, declined the option and contented himself with assistance from the service at Longwood. Scott denied to the Governor ever having conveyed other letters from his masters, and was dismissed with a warning against contravening the regulations made in that regard under penalty of severe punishment.

Some days afterwards, on the 25th of November, a man named John Scott waited on the Governor and said he was the father of James. His son, he went on, had been at Longwood on the previous day, and on his return showed him a waistcoat into the lining of which were sewn two strips of white taffeta silk, inscribed with minute writing. He also had an ordinary letter from Las Cases, addressed to Lady Clavering, which proved merely to be his "character" as a servant. The writing on the two pieces of silk, which was so small as only to be decipherable with a magnifying glass, turned out to be letters from the Count to Lady Clavering in London and Lucien Bonaparte in Rome. When the father saw these mysterious objects he became greatly alarmed, and told his son he must at once inform the Governor of the affair. The son, however, was much too frightened to go himself, so John Scott had lost no time in acquainting Sir Hudson with what was going on. The Governor warmly thanked him for his honest conduct, and immediately had James Scott

arrested ; while the pieces of silk were handed over to Major Gorrequer to be transcribed. On returning to James Town the Governor found that the affair had become known, John Scott having told several people before his interview with Sir Hudson. Prompt measures were therefore necessary. James Scott was sent for to the Governor's house, who there examined the contents of the writings. He ordered Mr. Rainsford, the Inspector of Police, to meet him on the road to Longwood, whither he set out, accompanied by Sir G. Bingham. Sir Hudson first saw Bertrand, while inquiries were being made as to what Las Cases was then doing. He was walking in the garden with the Emperor, while his son was indoors, writing. Lowe was desirous of not having the Count arrested in Napoleon's presence, nor to be present when the arrest was effected. He left the matter entirely in the hands of Mr. Rainsford and Sir Thomas Reade, the Governor's aide-de-camp, and in case of resistance directed that his (the Governor's) orderly dragoon should be in readiness, as well as Reade's own, and that a relief of sentries should be within call.

When told he was under arrest, Las Cases made no resistance, only asking to be allowed to see the Emperor. This was refused and he then quietly submitted—indeed, resistance would have been useless. He was then taken to the house at Hutt's Gate, where Rainsford brought his papers, and making them up into a parcel, sealed it with Reade's seal left for the purpose and



Las Cases' own. The packet was then placed in a trunk, which, in its turn, was sealed in like manner, and delivered to the officer of the guard at Hutt's Gate.

Late that afternoon Major Gorrequer, by the Governor's instructions, saw Las Cases, and offered him anything he might stand in need of from Sir Hudson's house. Las Cases replied, "I am very sensible of the Governor's great kindness, and shall be obliged if you will thank him on my behalf," adding that his wants were very few, and he would therefore require but little. He then asked how long he was to remain in that house. The Major replied that he believed until the following day, or until a more suitable and comfortable house could be provided. Las Cases begged that the Governor would not give himself any trouble on that score, as he was quite comfortable where he was, and if Sir Hudson spoke from any interest he took in his comfort, "assure him that I am infinitely better off here than in the cabin where I have been left for the last nine months, and that I feel vastly better for the change."

It is important to bear this and other conversations in mind, in view of the gross falsehoods that were afterwards disseminated about the whole affair.

Las Cases then said he would hold the authorities responsible before the law for the proceeding towards him—that he had been seized by force, arrested without reason assigned, and without giving him even a

moment to seal up his papers. He was answered that his papers would all be carefully preserved under seal. On the interview terminating, the Count said to Major Gorrequer: "Pardon me, sir, if I have said anything which I ought not, but excuses must be made for the first impulses one feels in such circumstances."

<sup>1</sup> According to Las Cases' account of his intrigues, his son was busy all day with the epistles, and at night the mulatto appeared, and being a bit of a tailor, sewed them into the waistcoat. The Count promised to give him some other things if he came again before his departure, for James Scott was about to leave the island. Las Cases then "went to bed, with a light heart, and a feeling of satisfaction, arising from the contemplation of a day well employed and happily employed." "Something attempted, some one done," to vary Longfellow's line. He was "far from thinking at that moment that he had just cut, with his own hand, the thread of his destiny at Longwood."

<sup>2</sup> As to his account of his arrest and subsequent detention at Hutt's Gate, the reliance to be placed on his veracity will be seen when we state that he describes the house as a "wretched hovel," and that he was obliged to sleep on a miserable pallet, his "poor son" by his side, lest he should have to lie on the floor; and this, be it noted, after having told Major Gor-

<sup>1</sup> *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, vol. iv. part 7, p. 264.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 268.

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requer that he was quite comfortable where he was, and vastly better for the change ! A French account of these occurrences, afterwards published in Paris, stated that "the barbarous Governor threw Las Cases and his son into a miserable cottage—a dark and infected place—a suddenly devised dungeon." Thus was the Napoleonic Legend built up of fraud and falsehood.

<sup>1</sup> In the *Voice from St. Helena*, the renegade surgeon O'Meara devotes only two or three lines to the cause of Las Cases' arrest. That was for public consumption, of course, and a detailed statement of the facts would not have suited his purpose, nor that of his Whig abettors.

<sup>2</sup> But again we get the truth from that invaluable repository, his letters to his confidant, Finlaison, where he gives a long and minute account of the affair, agreeing in every particular with what we have already set forth.

<sup>3</sup> After the arrest of Las Cases had been accomplished, the Governor sent Major Gorrequer to break the news to de Montholon so that the Emperor might be informed of what had occurred ; but as a matter of fact Napoleon had been an eye-witness of the affair, although himself concealed from view. De Montholon was asked to tell his master that the Governor regretted having had to proceed to extremes, but the conduct of Las Cases left him no alternative.

<sup>1</sup> *A Voice from St. Helena*, vol. i. p. 222.

<sup>2</sup> *Lowe Papers*, Forsyth, vol. i. p. 381.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 380.

<sup>1</sup> The next move of the Count was to express a belief that Scott was a spy of the Governor, employed to entrap him into a breach of the regulations, so that an excuse might be found to expel him from St. Helena. O'Meara in his book affects sympathy with Las Cases, but again his invaluable letters come in to reveal his real mind.

<sup>2</sup> "We all know," he writes, "that there was nothing in any of the letters that would hang Las Cases, as since the examination of his papers he was offered by Sir Hudson the choice either of returning to Longwood until the decision of the British Government respecting him should be known, or to be sent to the Cape, there to await it, which latter, after a great deal of shuffling, he embraced—which when connected with other circumstances, leads one to imagine that he formed the plan of the letters and gave them to the slave purposely to be discovered, in order that he might be sent off the island, not being able, after all his professions of eternal and unalterable fidelity *à l'Empereur*—to whom he declared so often his life was devoted, who he said was *his god*—with any decency to ask permission to go away; whereas by doing something which would cause his being ordered off the island, he would have the opportunity of availing himself of the pretext that he was forced to leave him."

<sup>1</sup> *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, vol. iv. part 7, p. 277

<sup>2</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. i. p. 381.

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For once, O'Meara's base and corrupt mind put him, in all likelihood, on the right track. "Set a thief to catch a thief," is a sound old proverb, and in this instance the surgeon's degraded instincts enabled him to see through the Count's trickery. That he was correct in his surmise is borne out by Lamartine, who, in his *History of the Restoration of Monarchy in France*, says: <sup>1</sup> "His (Napoleon's) friends and servants, wearied, not with duty but of patience; tired of separation from their families; of the climate; of sickness, and of inquisition, quitted him, or tried to quit him, under pretence of being torn from him by the persecution of the Governor, or of rendering him more useful services in Europe."

<sup>2</sup> In reporting the matter to Lord Bathurst, Lowe writes that he had impounded Las Cases' *Journal*, "the whole kept with the minuteness of *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, with the force of General Bonaparte's language, and the embellishments of Count Las Cases. Everything is sacrificed in it to the great object of presenting to posterity in the person of General Bonaparte, a model of excellence and virtue. Facts are altered, conversations only given by half; his own expressions repeated, the replies omitted. Such I have observed

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Restoration of Monarchy in France*, A. de Lamartine, Book 38, section 39, pp. 551, 552. London: Vizetelly & Co., 1852.

<sup>2</sup> *Lowe Papers*, Forsyth, vol. i. p. 382, etc.

to be particularly the case in conversations I have myself had with him, even where witnesses have been present."

<sup>1</sup> An amusing contest arose between Napoleon and Las Cases as to the possession of this *Journal*, Napoleon asserting that it had been written by his express orders, and Las Cases that it was a record of his own *pensées*, of which his master had no knowledge. Neither of these statements was strictly true, but whereas Napoleon's was entirely false, Las Cases' was only partly so. His master knew nothing of the fact that the Count was keeping this diary until one day he chanced to find him writing it up, and after that he occasionally read and corrected it. But it was absolutely false to say it had been kept by his express orders.

In this dilemma the Governor delivered a sort of "judgment of Solomon," and decided that neither of the claimants should have the disputed *Journal*. He locked it up for the present under seal.

<sup>2</sup> Las Cases *père et fils*, were removed on the 28th of November to Ross Cottage belonging to the Balcombés, where there was the same accommodation as at Longwood. They were allowed free access to the grounds, but were kept under view by the sentries, and not allowed to communicate with any persons except those authorized by the Governor.

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, Forsyth, vol. i. p. 384.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 386.

<sup>1</sup> Bertrand was sent by Napoleon to the Governor the day after the arrest, and instructed to speak for the prisoner, to protest against his seizure and demand his restoration to Longwood. It is significant that Bertrand only enlarged upon the Count's virtues, carefully omitting the protest and the desire to have him back. The fact was that the rest of the Frenchmen were glad, in their hearts, to be rid of a rival, whom the Emperor singled out as his special companion, and upon whom he lavished attentions which aroused much jealousy and heart-burning among the rest.

<sup>2</sup> Lowe bitterly complained to the prisoner of the systematic misrepresentations in the *Journal*, such as the reduction of expenses at Longwood, while not a word was written about his having, on his own initiative, raised the sum originally allocated by the British Government by as much as one-half. Las Cases expressed a great desire for a *rapprochement* and said he was ready "*de se sacrifier pour un raccommodement.*" He had nothing to say, however, in defence of his grossly garbled and manipulated record.

We shall only give one more example of Las Cases' bad faith before proceeding to his final disappearance, as it will show that in spite of his platonic desire for *rapprochement*, he still intended to continue his old system.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 387.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 388.

<sup>1</sup> He obtained the Governor's consent to his writing an "official letter," to him (Lowe) which, by the way, he had already prepared. In this he wrote, "In consequence of the snare which according to all appearances was laid by my servant, I was on the 28th inst. removed from Longwood and all my papers seized." Sir Hudson called on Las Cases on the 4th of December and strongly remonstrated with him for making this monstrous charge. Major Gorrequer, who was present, says: The Governor observed that to accuse the servant was to accuse him, as the servant could not have run the risk of carrying the plot into effect without his (Lowe's) knowledge. The English laws would not tolerate such a proceeding; it was against both the spirit and morality of English customs; and could he have been guilty of such a proceeding as that of employing a servant to entrap his master, he must have considered himself a dishonest man. He then explained how the discovery was made. Las Cases replied that he had been very careful of his wording, and had used the expression "*selon les apparences*," and had not intended to implicate the Governor. Now, however, that he had assured him it was not a plot, he was happy to be undeceived.

Now, what will be thought of Las Cases' sense of honour when we state that in subsequently publishing in book form his official letter to the Governor, the

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, Forsyth, vol. i. p. 390.



qualifying words "*selon les apparences*" were deliberately omitted, so that the atrocious charge by innuendo against Sir Hudson Lowe stands in all its naked malignity? Fortunately, the original letter was found among the Governor's papers, and the writer of it stands convicted of a singularly treacherous act, first in making these words the pretext for repudiating any intention of impugning the honour of the Governor, and then, by omitting them, spreading the infamous accusation broadcast throughout the world.

Meanwhile, in spite of all the horrible charges made against him in *Las Cases' Journal*, and the long series of affronts he had received from him, the Governor continued that noble and chivalrous requital of wrongs by benefits, which he had always pursued. <sup>1</sup> He sent Dr. Baxter specially to visit the Count and his son, who asserted they were ill, and the doctor thereafter wrote to Lowe as follows.

"12th of December, 1816. Old Las Cases said that however your actions might be influenced by political motives and circumstances, your conduct towards him since his removal from Longwood had been marked with that politeness and attention which was in every way agreeable to his feelings, and that he saw at present your character in a very different light and through quite another medium than when at Longwood."

<sup>2</sup> On the 11th of December, Napoleon wrote to Las

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, Forsyth, vol. ii. p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 2.

Cases. The letter contained all the old wearisome string of fables, plus the "plot" charge. It was, on de Montholon's own admission, deliberately designed to frighten the Governor and induce him to send Las Cases back to Longwood. When he heard that the Count was being kindly treated, Napoleon exclaimed, "Ha, ha! I gain ground. Decidedly Sir Hudson Lowe is afraid." On the 12th of December he remarked to his suite, "This Lowe is a cunning wretch, but I have just dictated to Marchand a fine letter for Las Cases. It will terribly embarrass the Governor." <sup>1</sup> Lowe showed the letter to the Count, but sent it to Lord Bathurst with comments, exposing the falsehoods with which it was crammed. He added that Las Cases' correspondence was quite different from that of the other exiles, being always full of insidious misrepresentations as to the situation in the island, and grievances, the greater part of which were inherent to their position, of which, as voluntarily assumed, they had no right to complain. "It is the return, however, which I have always received where my desire has been to show attention."

In showing Napoleon's letter to the Count, the Governor protested against its gross personal calumnies against himself, blended with violent and unfounded reflections on the Government. If he (Lowe) had been the greatest scoundrel in the world, he could not have been treated worse than in this letter.

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, Forsyth, vol. ii. p. 10.

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<sup>1</sup> In the conversation that followed Las Cases admitted that he had found he was wrong in his opinion of Lowe, and excused the Emperor's brutality on the plea that his bodily infirmities had affected his mind. If the Governor knew him he would find him to be a man of the best natural disposition. The Governor must have smiled at this if he had thought of his interviews with this man of the "best natural disposition." However, Lowe, with obstinate good-nature, invited Las Cases to draw up a memorandum of improvements that might be made in Napoleon's situation, and if they were consistent with the security of the Emperor's person he would carefully consider them. Las Cases appeared to assent to this, and agreed that the Governor was right in taking every precaution to ensure Napoleon's safety, which he admitted was the first and great object to keep in view. This is Major Gorrequer's account of the conversation.

<sup>2</sup> Having offered, as we have said, to allow Las Cases and his son to return to Longwood until the decision of the Government regarding them had been received, and that offer having been declined, Lowe asked him what he wished to do. To be sent to England, was the reply. The Governor said it was useless to talk of that as it was directly against his instructions. He could either stay in St. Helena or go to the Cape.

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, Forsyth, vol. ii. p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 16.

<sup>1</sup> It is almost incredible, but none the less true, that *after* this interview, in which he had declined to return to Longwood, Las Cases wrote to Bertrand, "To-day the Governor informs me that I am to wait here until answers come from England. Thus I shall be for months together at St. Helena, and Longwood will not exist for me; a new species of torment, which I had not thought of."

Further conversations and correspondence passed between Lowe and the Count, which it would be wearisome to detail, for they merely show the same old trickiness and shiftiness that to Las Cases had now become a second nature. <sup>2</sup> They all ended at last in an urgent request from the Count to be removed from the island at once. He asked to be allowed to see "his god" once more, and the request was granted on the condition that a British officer should be present at the interview. The condition was declined. The Count, as a last act, made over to the Emperor 4,000 louis in bills on London. We shall see in due course that this pretended gift was only another of the many fraudulent devices to impress the world with the belief that Napoleon was in desperate straits.

The sloop of war, *Griffon*, which conveyed Las Cases and his son to the Cape, sailed on the 30th of December, 1816.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 35.

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<sup>1</sup> He describes his departure as follows :

"All business being now settled between us, Sir Hudson Lowe, by a characteristic turn of behaviour, which he had oftener than once exhibited since I had been his prisoner, either from motives of civility or calculation, immediately wrote for me several letters of introduction to his private friends at the Cape, who, he assured me, would prove very agreeable to me. I had not the courage to refuse these letters, such was the sincerity with which they appeared to be offered.<sup>2</sup> At length the long-looked-for moment of departure arrived. The Governor accompanied me to the gate and ordered all his officers to attend me to the place of embarkation : this, he said, was intended as a mark of respect. I eagerly jumped into the boat which was in readiness to receive me."

It is perhaps needless to point out the vein of churlish ill-nature that runs through the above ; the unworthy insinuation that the Governor's generous conduct in giving his inveterate enemy and slanderer letters of

<sup>1</sup> *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, vol. iv. part 8, p. 36.

<sup>2</sup> *Lowe Papers*, Forsyth, vol. ii. p. 44. The action of Lowe in giving these letters of introduction was thus interpreted in a French publication. "He even gave him letters of introduction to influential persons at that place ; but the traitor, *we are assured*, at the moment when he was showing these apparent marks of interest for M. Las Cases, was making the frightful proposition, that as soon as he arrived in the Colony he should be thrown into irons, and that he should rot there."—*Recueil*, vol. xii. p. 38.

introduction proceeded from "calculation." The wretched man accepts them, not in a spirit of gratitude, not with any feeling of remorse for his long course of injuries, but because he had not the courage to refuse, such was the sincerity with which they "appeared" to be offered. To such a depth had this man been dragged down by the evil influence of his Satanic master !

However, he tells us that at length "the long-looked-for moment of departure came," and that he "eagerly jumped into the boat." Was it that, after all, his good angel prompted him to hail with joy his separation from the contamination of Longwood ?

And now, before we finally bid good-bye to Las Cases, let us see how the cruel, barbarous, inhuman gaoler, Lowe, wrote about him to Lord Charles Somerset, the Governor of the Cape ; and let us in reading it remember the libels, the insults, the disgraceful imputations and wicked innuendoes which the subject of it had heaped upon its writer.

<sup>1</sup> "I should not omit to add Count Las Cases is a man of considerable talents, of high literary attainments—exceedingly specious, eloquent and insinuating—is, or affects to be, a fanatic admirer, or rather adorer, of Bonaparte—has lived in closer habits of intimacy with him since his arrival on this island than any other person who accompanied him, and has been certainly the most active in keeping up the irritation of his mind against

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, Forsyth, vol. ii. p. 45.

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all the measures of the British Government, even repelling ameliorations of his own situation when offered. He has, besides, infringed the regulations, in different instances, before his last separation. In other respects he is a person of highly polite and gentle manners, and merits the consideration due to him on such account. His most judicious plan, I conceive, would be to remain quiet until Government sends its answers regarding him, and your lordship's suggestions on this point might, perhaps, have some weight with him."

The kindness of Sir Hudson in writing this letter was ill requited. When Las Cases' book appeared it contained the most false and calumnious statements regarding his treatment at the Cape and the conduct of the Governor of that Colony towards him. In March, 1819, Lord Charles Somerset wrote as follows to Sir Hudson Lowe: <sup>1</sup> "The whole of the Count's publication (if it really be his) is so contemptible a performance, that I own his wailings and his complaints, as far as they involve myself, are matters perfectly indifferent to me. With regard to his assertions respecting the Cape, and his treatment here, I know them to be so absolutely and impudently false that it is not too much to presume there is not a single correct statement in the whole book."

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, Forsyth, vol. iii. p. 148.

## CHAPTER XXI

### CONCERNING A BUST, BONBONS AND OTHER MATTERS

AFTER the departure of Las Cases efforts were made to improve the relations between Napoleon and the Governor, but the former was so infuriated at the refusal to allow the Count to see him except in the presence of a British officer, that nothing in the direction of pacification could be done. As usual, the Emperor accused Lowe of an act of barbarity in not permitting the idolater to see his "god," carefully omitting to say that permission had been given subject to the one condition, which Napoleon refused to accept.

We have already mentioned that the Pole, Poniontowski, had been expelled the island. He, too, had been actively engaged in the export of falsehoods, and had shown himself a particularly truculent and impudent person. Napoleon repudiated all responsibility for him, saying that all he knew about him was that he had been a soldier of his guard at Elba, and had never been asked to come to St. Helena. <sup>1</sup> This Pole was treated quite

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, Forsyth, vol. ii. p. 60.



like a menial at Longwood, and was never admitted either to the table or the society of the Emperor or the suite. Conduct which from Las Cases could hardly be borne, was quite intolerable in the case of this man, and his career of mischief was therefore a very short one.

Three of the useless and redundant retinue of servants were also dismissed—Santini the *huissier*, who, as we have seen, had conceived murderous designs against the Governor; Archambaud, the groom, and Rousseau, the *argentier*. Santini, on arriving in England, was got hold of by a certain Colonel Maceroni, who had been in the service of Murat, and made use of the half-mad Corsican to fabricate a sensational pamphlet entitled: <sup>1</sup>*An Appeal to the British Nation on the Treatment of the Emperor Napoleon at St. Helena*. It purported, quite falsely, to be the work of Santini himself, who was almost an illiterate, and absolutely incapable of producing such a work. In point of fact, Maceroni soon after avowed the authorship, but it appeared as if nothing could emanate from Napoleon's partisans without the taint of fraud attaching to it. This precious production was published by Ridgeways, and had a ready sale, being hawked about the streets and otherwise energetically "pushed." <sup>2</sup> It was eagerly acclaimed by "the base, brutal and bloody Whigs," and Santini became their

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, Forsyth, vol. ii. p. 157.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 158.

hero, hobnobbing with Lords Holland and Grey, Sir Robert Wilson and other high-souled champions of the "Martyr of Longwood." It is only fair to the Whig hero-and-martyr-in-chief to say that he ridiculed the whole thing, describing the pamphlet as a "foolish production full of lies," and adding that Santini had a true Corsican head, and could not be the author, as he would not have praised Admiral Cockburn, but if left to himself would have abused everybody; the author, in Napoleon's opinion, was some Englishman.

On arriving at the Cape Las Cases sent Lowe a verbose protest against his treatment, full of the customary falsehoods and irrelevancies. One of his chief complaints was that he had been sent to the Cape without his papers, whereas they had all been delivered to him except the *Journal*, which, as we have seen, was claimed by the Emperor. We have also seen how he was offered by Lowe the alternative of remaining at St. Helena until the receipt of instructions from the Ministry as to his disposal, and how of his own free will he decided to proceed at once to the Cape. The other statements in this "protest" were equally devoid of truth.

While Las Cases had been the arch-intriguer at Longwood the "Grand Maréchal" had been a fairly good second, and Lowe had informed Lord Bathurst of his consistent insolence and defiance of regulations.

<sup>1</sup> His lordship, in October, 1816, wrote to the Governor

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, Forsyth, vol. i. p. 321.

that the Prince Regent entirely approved of his conduct under very difficult circumstances—the intemperate outbursts of Napoleon and the general insubordination of his satellites; that unless Bertrand reformed his behaviour no doubt Sir Hudson would have to remove him also from the island. Lord Bathurst added that he had reason to believe that the “Grand Maréchal” wanted to go, and that his insolence was deliberately assumed to lead to that result. With regard to the sum allocated for the expenses of the exiles, his lordship wrote that it had originally been fixed at £8,000 per annum, owing to the probable reduction of the numbers of the household; but as that expectation had not been realized, he would sanction such increase as Lowe might think necessary, but on no account was the increase to exceed £4,000. Should Napoleon still refuse to bear any excess, there would be no alternative but to put the establishment on a fixed allowance, so as to bring the charge within the specified limit of £12,000. As to the book which was retained owing to its sender, the Whig Hobhouse having inscribed it “To Napoléon le Grand,” Lord Bathurst cordially approved the Governor’s action.

These facts are a further proof that in all he did Lowe was acting on specific instructions from the British Ministry, and with their full approval and support.

We now come to an episode about which more un-

blushing falsehoods have been told and believed than about any other occurrence during Napoleon's exile.

<sup>1</sup> A bust of Napoleon's son, the titular "King of Rome," was sent to St. Helena, apparently as a speculative venture by the owners in London, to see if it would extract a good round sum from the Emperor's pocket. Again, in this instance, a quite unnecessary atmosphere of deceit and concealment was evolved to cloak the transaction. The bust was taken on board the stores vessel *Baring* by one of the crew, a foreigner named Radovitch, without the knowledge of the captain. The vessel arrived at St. Helena on the 28th of May, by which time Radovitch was prostrated with an apoplectic attack, followed by delirium. The bust was discovered and brought to the Governor on the 10th of June, and after a short deliberation was transmitted to Napoleon on the 11th, after Bertrand had expressed the opinion that his master would be delighted to have it. The Emperor asserted that the bust had been detained for fourteen days by Lowe, whom he also accused of having given orders to smash it up. To O'Meara he said: "I intended, if it had not been given to me, to have made such a complaint as would have caused every Englishman's hair to stand on end with horror. I would have told a tale that would have made the mothers of England execrate him as a monster in human shape."

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, Forsyth, vol. ii. pp. 145-153.

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Radovitch, who had now recovered sufficiently from his illness to get about, had an interview with Napoleon. The price asked for the bust was £100, but Napoleon gave him £300. <sup>1</sup> Radovitch went off to England with the money, but never turned over a penny of it to the people who had employed him, and who were reduced to great distress in consequence—another example of the swindling that seemed to cling to the Bonapartist cause. <sup>2</sup> O'Meara most falsely asserts that the “poor man” Radovitch, by some unworthy tricks, did not receive the money for nearly two years. The only “unworthy trick” was that played on his employers by the “poor man” himself. However, this lie was industriously circulated and very generally believed, and passes current to-day as part of the gospel of Napoleonism.

Lord Bathurst, in a despatch of the 31st of October, 1817, tells Lowe that the Prince Regent thoroughly approved of the bust having been given to Napoleon, but that the suspicious circumstances surrounding it fully justified preliminary inquiries. Had it been anything else, the Governor, he said, would have been quite right in retaining it for a much longer period. There could be no doubt that attempts were being made to smuggle through clandestine communications, which

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, Forsyth, vol. ii. p. 152.

<sup>2</sup> *A Voice from St. Helena*, vol. ii. p. 152.

“will be much encouraged if it be once understood that your vigilance abates.”

<sup>1</sup> Shortly after this the Hon. John Elphinstone, late the President of the East India Company in China, asked the Governor to present to the Emperor, on his behalf, a set of ivory chessmen, which Lowe agreed to do. He found, however, that each of the pieces was surmounted with the letter N and an imperial crown in gold. This was a distinct infringement of the Government's instructions, but Sir Hudson, on this occasion, having promised the donor to transmit the gift, ignored them, and sent the chessmen to Bertrand, with a very polite note, remarking that by doing so he was “exceeding his instructions.” Bertrand's reply was couched in very insolent and offensive terms. Lord Bathurst, on the 18th of September, 1817, wrote approving Lowe's action, but he added: “I am so sensible of the inconvenience that may result from receiving anything addressed to him as a sovereign prince, that I deem it necessary to instruct you that in case of any present being hereafter forwarded to Bonaparte to which emblems or titles of sovereignty are annexed, you are to consider that circumstance as altogether precluding delivery, if they cannot be removed without prejudice to the present itself.”

As a matter of fact these presents were an unmitigated nuisance, and were mostly intended as such. Every

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, Forsyth, vol. ii. p. 154.

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factionous Whig, more burdened with money than wit, adopted this means of annoying the Tory Government and worrying their representative. Lord and Lady Holland and the Duke of Bedford, for instance, sent their darling books and sweetmeats and caricatures. Lowe detained the caricatures, but sent on the books and bon-bons, and asked Lord Amherst, the British Ambassador to China, who was then at St. Helena, on his way to England, to tell the Hollands of the difficulty and embarrassment that such presents occasioned him in the performance of his duty.

It is obvious that gifts from such influential quarters were a cruel kindness to Napoleon. They had the effect of encouraging false hopes that the Whig Opposition could badger the Government into releasing him, or that a turn of the political wheel of fortune would bring them into office, with the same result. They also showed that his assumed enemy, the Governor, was theirs also, and he was thus stimulated to fresh exertions in his campaign of insolence and insults.

<sup>1</sup> Lord Amherst had an interview with Napoleon on the 1st of July, the day before he left for England, during which the Emperor poured out the usual flood of grievances, and asked his lordship to convey them to the Prince Regent. Lord Amherst told Sir Hudson of the message, and asked him if he thought he ought to report all these bitter complaints. The Governor

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, Forsyth, vol. ii. p. 173.

replied, "Most certainly, everything," on which his lordship said, "In such case, sir, I shall think it my duty as an honest man to say at the same time that I consider them unfounded."

Before we proceed to describe what was now passing in the Longwood household, which, as we shall show, was anything but an "Abode of Love," we must refer to one little episode which throws a significant light on the Governor's humanity, and is another proof of the utter falsity of the wicked misrepresentations to which his character has been subjected.

<sup>1</sup> It appears that at this time, a file of newspapers had been received from Europe for the Emperor. In looking through them, Sir Hudson noticed an announcement that Bertrand had been condemned by a French Court for high treason *in contumaciam*. In the then state of political feeling in France this was a very serious matter. Ney and Labédoyère had been condemned for the same offence and shot; and Lavalette had only escaped a similar fate through the heroism of his wife. The Governor, who has been held up to execration as a callous, brutal, inhuman monster, immediately saw that if this paper fell into the hands of Madame Bertrand it would greatly terrify her; he therefore wrote a private note to her husband, warning him of what the paper contained, and cautioning him not to let it fall into his wife's hands. Could anything

<sup>1</sup> *Love Papers*, Forsyth, vol. ii. p. 173.



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more display Sir Hudson's real character, as a kindly, considerate and humane man, an honour to the noble profession of which he had been so distinguished a member ?

## CHAPTER XXII

### A FISH OUT OF WATER

**L**AS CASES having been got rid of, the household at Longwood now consisted of the "Grand Maréchal" Bertrand and his wife and family, the Comte and Comtesse de Montholon and their children, and General Gourgaud.

One would have supposed that harmony would now have reigned in the Emperor's "court." Las Cases had been the one member of the suite upon whom the jealousy and dislike of the others had been concentrated. He was the labourer who had come into the vineyard, so to speak, at the eleventh hour. He had started as a fanatical royalist, and for a considerable period of his life had been an *émigré*, and during many years a resident in *perfidie Albion*. In the eyes of the others, therefore, he was an interloper and a suspect. They had been Republicans like their master, whose fortunes they had followed through all his protean changes; they had borne the burden and heat of the day; and yet here was this tardy disciple, not only received on an equality with them, but singled out as the special

favourite and confidant of their master, who lavished on him tenfold the amount of attention which was bestowed on them. The reason of this favouritism was not far to seek. Las Cases was a born courtier, thoroughly versed in all the arts of subserviency and flattery essential to success in that particular rôle. He never contradicted Napoleon; and seldom even asked him questions, allowing him to pour out his distortions of fact and perversions of history without ever challenging their accuracy. In fact he was the priest before the oracle, and to the Napoleonic deity he offered a daily, nay hourly, tribute of highly perfumed incense. This was exactly what his master loved. As truth was always to Napoleon the most abhorrent of things, it was ecstasy to him to find a worshipper who could swallow all his falsehoods without turning a hair. Hence he delighted in the Count's society, and hence also the others hated the favourite as only favourites can be hated. <sup>1</sup> His amiable colleagues at Longwood called him "the Jesuit."

<sup>2</sup> Of the three who now remained at Longwood, one was a thoroughly honest, truthful man, and it is perhaps quite needless to say that as such, he found himself in anything but a happy position amidst that atmosphere of fraud. General Gourgaud was a bluff, straightforward soldier. He had shown himself a brave and

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. i. p. 239.

<sup>2</sup> *Events of a Military Life*, Henry, vol. ii. p. 47.

able officer of artillery, and had distinguished himself greatly during the campaign of 1813. His promotion had been rapid, and as a soldier Napoleon held him in high esteem. But almost immediately after the arrival of the exiles at St. Helena, Gourgaud's relations with his master became very cool indeed. He was the very antithesis of Las Cases, with an inveterate and irrepressible habit of blurting out unpleasant truths at the most unseasonable times. So far did he carry this unpalatable veracity, that on one occasion Napoleon angrily exclaimed: <sup>1</sup> "What does your being an honest man matter to me? You ought to have no other object than to make yourself agreeable to me. You possess the virtues of a savage, while Las Cases is as sweet as a woman. You are jealous of him, and you have the indecency to let him see it."

After the disappearance of Las Cases, Bertrand and Montholon directed all their immense powers of persecution against the General, and lost no opportunity of widening the already existing breach between him and his master. <sup>2</sup> Gourgaud's position had always been an unhappy one. While Las Cases lived in constant companionship with his son and the Emperor, and Bertrand and Montholon had their wives and families to mitigate their exile, Gourgaud lived in complete

<sup>1</sup> *Journal Inédit de Sainte Hélène*, Baron Gourgaud, vol. i. chap. 6, p. 344.

<sup>2</sup> *Events of a Military Life*, Henry, vol. i. p. 47.

isolation. He had irritated Napoleon by his unfortunate tendency to speak the truth, and was quite out of touch with his fellow-exiles. Moreover, his honest, manly nature revolted at the deceit and trickery he saw going on around him, in which Napoleon himself was the leader. He writes in his *Journal*,<sup>1</sup> "I see around me many intrigues and much deception. *Pauvre Gourgaud ! Qu'allais-tu faire dans cette galère ?*" He expressed strong disapproval of the Emperor's attitude towards the Governor, and particularly of the letter written by him to Las Cases, to which reference has already been made. De Montholon took care to repeat the General's remarks to his master, with embellishments of his own. Extreme irritation was produced in Gourgaud's mind when he found what Montholon was doing, and he threatened to slap his face and call him out. <sup>2</sup> A violent quarrel broke out between Napoleon and Gourgaud, occasioned by a discussion on the Moscow campaign, about which (a sore subject, naturally, with the Emperor) Gourgaud expressed himself with injudicious frankness. From this they drifted off to a blunt criticism by the General of Napoleon's conduct after the battle of Waterloo, Gourgaud expressing the opinion that the Emperor should not have surrendered to England, but placed himself at the head of the Army of the Loire and continued the struggle. The result of

<sup>1</sup> *Talks of Napoleon at St. Helena*, Latimer, p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. ii. p. 188, etc.

this encounter was that the two were not on speaking terms for a fortnight. This quarrel was adjusted, but the truce was short-lived. Gourgaud found himself in disagreement with the rest on the subject of Lowe's conduct, which he denied had been harsh or unkind.

<sup>1</sup> He said to Count Balmain, the Russian Commissioner, that he strongly disapproved of Napoleon's behaviour towards Lowe personally, and avowed that had he been in the Governor's place he would have acted with more rigour—" *Je les aurais bloqués plus étroitement ; il a cause de se plaindre,*" was his exact expression, a valuable testimony, from a man who was intimately acquainted with the facts, that Napoleon and not the Governor was in the wrong.

<sup>2</sup> He was also thoroughly disgusted with the affair of the plate-selling. After leaving Longwood, he told the Governor that at the very moment when this "heroic sacrifice" was being made (which Gourgaud described as a most unworthy trick), the exiles were actually in possession of a large sum in gold, and were plentifully supplied with resources of every kind. The Governor suggested that perhaps this money was contributed by Las Cases. "Oh, no," was the reply, "before Las Cases' donation was received they had Fcs. 240,000 in gold, a large part in Spanish doubloons ; oh, they have no want of money." He went on to say

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, Forsyth, vol. ii. p. 190.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 259, 260.

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that Prince Eugène Beauharnais had lodged a large sum with his bankers to Napoleon's credit; and he also told Stürmer, the Austrian Commissioner, that Las Cases had received an order for Fcs. 200,000, so that his "gift" of 4,000 louis had been repaid twice over. It thus appears that this "generous contribution" in aid of his "penniless" hero, was, like the breaking up of the silver, a "put up job," to promote the fiction of Napoleon's destitution, and that the Count, under a pretence of sublime self-sacrifice, had made a very good thing out of the transaction. Lord Bathurst's indignation at the episode was therefore entirely unnecessary.

Apart from his abhorrence of the disreputable on-goings of his associates, Gourgaud's life was very wretched. O'Meara told the Governor that the poor General lived miserably and almost always alone, seldom seeing the Emperor, and only dining with him now and then on a Sunday, when specially invited, but by no means so often as Bertrand and Montholon. It is not a matter for surprise that this wretched existence rapidly told upon the General's health. To a man accustomed to the stirring life of a soldier, and the good-fellowship which it affords, it must have been terrible to find himself on a remote island in the Atlantic, in the hands of his former enemies, and not only without the mitigating sympathy of his master and compatriots, but treated by them either with entire

neglect or bitter hostility. He soon fell into a state of extreme despondency, and at last, on the 6th of February, 1818, O'Meara told the Governor that Gourgaud, unable longer to bear the Emperor's outbursts of ill-temper and the hundred and one other indignities to which he was subjected, desired permission to leave the island. He told O'Meara that Montholon's conduct towards him had become unbearable, and the surgeon described him as with tears in his eyes and in the lowest state of depression.

<sup>1</sup> On the 7th Gourgaud called on the Governor at Plantation House, and begged to be removed as quickly as possible from Longwood. He said, "I can no longer live there without dishonour. I have been treated like a dog. I would rather die in a French prison than live here, acting the part of chamberlain, with total loss of my independence. He (Napoleon) has wished me to do things contrary to my honour, or force me by bad treatment to leave him."

The Governor pointed out to the General that his departure from Longwood might subject him to misconstruction. He might either be regarded as a person charged by Napoleon with secret communications for Europe, or reproached for having abandoned him. Gourgaud replied that as to the first, he was well aware that he would be liable to such a suspicion, and he therefore wished to be treated with every rigour. He

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, Forsyth, vol. ii. p. 247.



would be perfectly satisfied, when he returned to England, to be sent as a prisoner to France. With regard to the other point he said, "I am quite indifferent. Let them attack me—I will answer. I would rather be in prison than continue to live in the manner we go on here."

De Montholon (*Récits*) says that Gourgaud's departure had become necessary owing to his failing health, and the Emperor availed himself of this opportunity to have the real truth concerning his sufferings made known in Europe. Like all the rest of the statements issuing from Longwood, this was contrary to fact. An angry correspondence had been exchanged between himself and Gourgaud before the latter applied for permission to go, and the General had challenged Montholon to mortal combat. Indeed, so apprehensive was the Governor of the quarrel ending in a duel that he gave particular instructions to the orderly officer at Longwood to be on the alert to prevent it.

<sup>1</sup> On the 8th of February the Governor wrote to Gourgaud that he would be happy to facilitate his object as early as the nature of his instructions would permit, and that meanwhile, he would have apartments allotted for his residence until an opportunity occurred for his departure from the island.

Gourgaud accordingly bade farewell to Longwood and

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, Forsyth, vol. ii. p. 248.

was installed in comfortable quarters in another house at the expense of the Government, where he had a pleasant companion in Lieutenant Jackson, who afterwards corrected many of the falsehoods emanating from the French exiles.

<sup>1</sup> During an examination of his papers by Major Gorrequer, Gourgaud freely conversed with that officer and gave him some interesting facts in connection with the doings of the Longwood *ménage*. He told the Major that they never had any difficulty in getting letters away without passing them through the Governor's hands. Personally, he had only sent one, and that was to his mother, but he could have sent thirty had he wanted to. "I have been treated like a dog," he said. "They wished to compromise me that I might be obliged to remain there all my life." Had an angel, he added, been sent to St. Helena as Governor, it would have been all the same. Had Napoleon been allowed the run of the whole island, he would have been equally dissatisfied. It was not merely Longwood, it was St. Helena itself that he objected to. "After all," said the General, "he has been Emperor and is such no longer, *et voilà ce que c'est*." He said further that the best mode of paying court to Napoleon was to speak ill of the Governor; but the abuse of Lowe by the Emperor was not a personal matter; it was *par poli-*

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 250.

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*tique*; he had always hoped to obtain something *à force de plaintes*.

<sup>1</sup>In after years Lieut.-Col. Jackson, as he had then become (Assistant Surgeon of the 66th Regiment stationed at St. Helena from 1817 to 1821), in letters to Mr. Henry, published in that gentleman's *Events of a Military Life*, narrated the circumstances attending Gourgaud's departure. He mentions incidentally that Napoleon himself fomented jealousies among his suite, on the principle *divide et impera* (just as he had done, by the way, with regard to his marshals—see Ségur's *Moscow Campaign*), and that he (Jackson) fancied Las Cases was glad to get out of the mess. Gourgaud at length, says Jackson, found his isolated position intolerable, and when in his new quarters, nothing could exceed the Governor's attention and hospitality to him. <sup>2</sup>"In justice," he proceeds, "to that excellent and grossly maligned individual, I shall now relate a circumstance which I am sure General Gourgaud will be ready to confirm. <sup>3</sup>The General had an interview with Lowe at Plantation House, on leaving Longwood, and when riding back with me, he broke out into strong exclamations of surprise that Lowe should simply have received him as one gentleman would receive another, without even alluding to Longwood. '*Je ne reviens pas de*

<sup>1</sup> *Events of a Military Life*, Henry, vol. ii. p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 48.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 6.

*mon étonnement, non, je n'en reviens pas,*' he exclaimed. I may add that I had many opportunities of remarking the really chivalrous delicacy of Lowe in reference to Gourgaud."

<sup>1</sup>With regard to Bertrand, his conduct greatly incensed Gourgaud, who repeated to Lowe a remark made by Napoleon that Talleyrand's description of the "Grand Maréchal" was perfectly just—" *que c'était l'homme le plus faux et le plus dissimulé de la France.*" It is true that Talleyrand must have forgotten his own existence when he made the remark.

At last the time approached when Gourgaud's ardent desire to leave St. Helena was about to be gratified. <sup>2</sup>O'Meara, who never missed an opportunity of gratifying his malignant propensity for slander, asserted that Gourgaud tried to blackmail his master, under the threat of writing the truth about him and his friends on his return to Europe. <sup>3</sup>The fact is that Napoleon offered him Fcs. 12,000, which the General refused, being determined to incur no monetary obligation towards the man who had treated him so ungratefully. Being entirely without means, he asked Bertrand to advance him two or three hundred pounds to get him to Europe. The "Grand Maréchal" declined, on the ground that the General's refusal of Napoleon's offer was an act of

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, Forsyth, vol. ii. p. 260.

<sup>2</sup> *Events of a Military Life*, Henry, vol. ii. p. 47.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 49.

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gross disrespect to the great man. He would, however, lend him the money, conditionally on Gourgaud's accepting the Emperor's offer. <sup>1</sup> This the General firmly declined to do, and as he was absolutely penniless, the brutal, inhuman Governor gave him a hundred pounds out of his own pocket. No wonder Lowe has been denounced by Napoleonists ever since as an infamous scoundrel !

<sup>1</sup> *Events of a Military Life*, Henry, vol. ii. pp. 49, 50.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### MEDICO AND "MOUTON"

GOURGAUD having followed Las Cases, the field remained in the undisputed possession of the "Grand Maréchal" and the Comte de Montholon. There was, however, a third denizen of Longwood, who now comes prominently into view, the Irish surgeon, Barry O'Meara, a biographical sketch of whom has already been given, but about whom we must now say a good deal more. His conduct greatly added to the Governor's embarrassments, and was without the excuses that can be advanced for the French residents at Longwood. They, at all events, were avowed partisans of Napoleon. To him they owed all the distinction they had acquired ; and so far from feeling called upon to exert their influence in favour of Sir Hudson, they very naturally looked upon him as the embodiment of that Power with which they had been struggling for twenty years, and which, as their master himself had said, was the life and soul of the coalition against him.

O'Meara's case was very different. He had, as we have seen, been during all his active life in the service

of England, first as an army surgeon, and afterwards entering the navy in the same capacity. As a British officer it was his manifest duty to co-operate with the Governor ; not, of course, to do anything dishonourable, but loyally and heartily to support Sir Hudson in the most arduous and delicate position in which he was placed. So far from acting in this manner, he was a greater thorn in Lowe's side than all the Frenchmen combined, thwarting the Governor in every possible way ; defying the regulations ; and assuming towards Lowe an attitude of insolence and insult which was only second to that of Napoleon himself.

The fundamental cause of this extraordinary conduct was the character of the man himself. He was the type of a certain class not rare among Irishmen. He was afflicted with a colossal vanity and self-conceit ; combined with an instinctive delight in defying the authorities under whom he was placed ; and he had a perfect mania for duplicity and intrigue. He seemed utterly incapable of doing anything in an open, straightforward manner if the end could by any possibility be gained by deceit. To such a nature the position of affairs at St. Helena offered a splendid opportunity ; and it almost seems as if a malignant demon had contrived to place him there.

He had met Napoleon on the *Northumberland*, and soon attracted the Emperor's notice by his knowledge of Italian, the language which was Napoleon's native

tongue, and which he spoke far more readily than French. In fact, whenever he met any one who could speak Italian he preferred to use it as a vehicle for conversation. To be noticed by a world-wide celebrity like Napoleon naturally flattered the vanity of this excessively vain Irishman; but to be singled out later on as that celebrity's personal medical adviser must have uplifted him to the very empyrean of self-conceit. Napoleon asked the British Admiralty to permit O'Meara to be attached to him in that capacity, and in an evil moment the permission was granted. It was then merely a question of time and dexterity for the Irish surgeon to become *plus royaliste que le roi*.

Napoleon, with that instinct of cunning which he possessed in a supreme degree, saw at a glance that O'Meara was just the man he wanted. His French partisans suffered from the drawback of being French. Their evidence must inevitably be impregnated with doubt; the world would naturally discount statements emanating from Gallican sources. To carry conviction, it was of supreme importance for Napoleon to procure as an advocate a subject of the Power that had been his most inveterate enemy, and if that subject held a commission in the naval or military forces of Britain, his testimony would be accepted as "confirmation strong as proof of holy writ." His penetrating eye saw in Barry O'Meara an ideal instrument, and he laid himself out at once to land his fish. We know that



Napoleon was a consummate master of the art of cajolery. Not a single visitor to Longwood that passed through his hands, but was delighted with the charm of the exile, and left him persuaded that he was the most misjudged and most harshly treated of victims. He therefore had an easy task with a person of O'Meara's nature ; playing upon his vanity as a man and a physician ; treating him as a confidential friend and paying deference to him in his professional capacity. In addition to his inordinate vanity O'Meara's instinctive love of intrigue came into play. It was difficult even for an honest man to remain honest in the atmosphere of Longwood, but O'Meara took to crooked courses as naturally as a duck takes to water, and he very soon became an adept in all the tricks that were being played in the Emperor's household ; and, what must have been to him the acme of ecstasy, he found himself able to act the double part of friend and confidant to Napoleon and agent of Sir Hudson Lowe. Thus every chord of his nature was touched, and for some twenty months he must have led what was for him an ideal existence.

It will be remembered that before he was definitely installed at Longwood, the Emperor had asked him whether he considered himself solely and simply his medical adviser, or whether he was also to figure as the confidential agent of the Governor, in which case Napoleon said he had no wish to employ his services ; and that O'Meara had replied that he could not conceive

being asked to act as a spy by Sir Hudson, nor would he, if asked, under any circumstances, consent to do so. Not only, however, did he at many interviews impart to the Governor all he saw and heard at Longwood, but he kept a diary in which he recorded daily all the details which he afterwards so communicated. Nay, he did more than this, for his daily records were transmitted freely and fully to his friend, Mr. John Finlaison, of the Admiralty, who handed these lively and interesting letters to his chief, Mr. John Wilson Croker, who in turn passed them on to Lord Bathurst, so that the whole inner life of Longwood was graphically laid bare both to the British authorities at St. Helena and in London by this high-souled incarnation of rectitude, the Irish surgeon. It was in this way that his veracious letters to Mr. Finlaison were carefully preserved, and proved an invaluable antidote to the wholesale falsehoods of his book *A Voice from St. Helena*.

It is a matter of interest to know how this correspondence began, because the facts throw an additional light upon O'Meara's monstrous treachery. The particulars were given afterwards by Mr. Finlaison in a letter to the *Morning Chronicle* dated 3rd of March, 1823, in which he exposed a gross falsehood about himself in O'Meara's lying production.

The two men had been friends for some time, and in July, 1815, Mr. Finlaison received from the surgeon a private letter giving information about Napoleon and

his suite. Certain expressions which it contained led the recipient to doubt the propriety of entertaining such correspondence without the sanction of his official superiors. He therefore communicated the letter to Mr. Croker, Secretary to the Admiralty, who referred the matter to Lord Melville. That nobleman saw no reason against continuing the relations thus begun, as it might be advantageous to learn from an impartial and near observer the situation of the Emperor and his friends. In order, however, that no suggestion of duplicity should attach to the matter, he desired Mr. Finlaison to apprise O'Meara that his letters would be seen by the Ministers. O'Meara next asked his friend to use his influence to get him confirmed in his appointment as Napoleon's surgeon, and continued thus: "It is my intention to collect every anecdote I can from Napoleon and those about him, and perhaps my being near him might not be of disservice to the Government, especially if he entertained thoughts of escape; at least, my being constantly near him would probably lead to a discovery of any plans he might hereafter project."

Mr. Finlaison observes in his letter to the *Morning Chronicle* that he quotes this passage to show that he was not authorized to *originate* any proposal to O'Meara to give intelligence relative to Napoleon, and did not in fact do so, but that the proposition came *voluntarily* from his friend,

The letters, on arrival, were passed on to Mr. Croker, who had them copied for the perusal of the Ministers. There were some passages which Croker refused to have copied, for O'Meara was blackguard enough to make therein indelicate reflections on some of the French ladies and others, quite unfit for publication. We thus find that this unscrupulous rascal, who, as we shall see, ranted about his high-flown principles of professional honour, offered to act as spy while posing as doctor, as an inducement to the Ministry to ratify his appointment at Longwood. Could baseness descend to lower depths than this!

After this double life had been led by O'Meara for some twenty months, a coolness gradually sprang up between him and Sir Hudson. It would seem that this game had commenced to lose its attractions, and that his instinct of being "agin the Government" began to assert itself. In an interview between Lowe and O'Meara on the 25th of November, 1817, an explosion took place. <sup>1</sup> Major Gorrequer was present and took a memorandum of the conversation. The Governor asked O'Meara whether "there was no subject spoken of between him and Napoleon fit for him (the Governor) to hear. Whether there was nothing of sufficient importance for him to be informed of." This, of course, was asked by Lowe as a natural question, arising out of the voluntary and unasked for communications

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, Forsyth, vol. ii. p. 235.

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which had been made by O'Meara regularly for so many months past. To the Governor's astonishment the surgeon, for the first time in his experience, assumed an air of virtuous indignation, and told Lowe that to ask him to repeat what had been said by Napoleon in private conversation was to ask him to become a spy and a "*mouton*." Lowe, stung by the affront, hotly replied that the expressions used by O'Meara were the most insulting and disrespectful that could be used towards him as Governor of the island, and asked O'Meara what he meant by the word *mouton*. O'Meara rejoined with consummate impertinence that it meant a person who insinuated himself into the confidence of others for the purpose of extracting information or secrets from them, and then repeating what he had heard. The Governor said he could not suffer a person to sit down in the same room with him who treated him in so insulting and disrespectful a manner as O'Meara had just done, and desired him to rise and quit it; adding that if it was not for consideration for Napoleon's feelings O'Meara should not stay another hour in the island. "I should not be sorry for that," retorted O'Meara; but instead of leaving the room, he remained inside the door, and began saying he would leave it to anybody whether, if he acted in the way he had mentioned, he would not be considered a spy and a *mouton*. The Governor thereupon again desired O'Meara to quit the room, and to come only when sent for.

On the 18th of December, 1817, O'Meara was again summoned to Plantation House, and the surgeon afterwards gave a most mendacious account of what occurred in his <sup>1</sup> *Voice from St. Helena*. According to that version the Governor insulted him more outrageously than before, and followed him out of the room, vociferating after him in a frantic manner, and carried his gestures so far as to menace him with personal violence.

<sup>2</sup> Fortunately, in this case also we have a corrective to this tissue of falsehoods in the minute recorded by Major Gorrequer, which puts a very different complexion on the episode, and gives particulars which O'Meara very judiciously omits from his book. The Major says that O'Meara confessed to the Governor, on this occasion, after much hesitation and with great reluctance, that notwithstanding his frequent spontaneous communications to Lowe, and his series of gossiping and garrulous letters to Finlaison from May, 1816, to December, 1817, he was during the whole of that period under a pledge to Napoleon not to reveal conversations that passed between them, unless they related to his escape. The Governor expressed his indignation, and asked him how then had he reported to him so many conversations which had no tendency whatever to an escape?

The fact is, O'Meara had impaled himself, by his own admission, on the horns of a dilemma. Either he was

<sup>1</sup> *A Voice from St. Helena*, vol. ii. p. 347.

<sup>2</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. ii. p. 230.

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acting a treacherous part to his country by giving such a promise, or having given it, he was acting dishonourably to Napoleon by consistently and persistently breaking it. It was, perhaps, merely a thoughtless indiscretion that he, as a British officer, had committed in entering into a secret pact with a prisoner of State, and as such was a comparatively venial offence, but what terms can be too severe to condemn a man who repeatedly violated a solemn pledge over a continuous period of twenty months?

After this, there is a sublime effrontery in O'Meara's letter of the 23rd of December to the Governor, wherein he waxes eloquent upon the turpitude of a physician who insinuates himself into the confidence of a patient and abuses his position to wring from him, under the pretext of being near his person, disclosures of the patient's sentiments for the purpose of betraying them afterwards—such a man deserves most justly to be branded with the appellation of *mouton*. Now, seeing that this was exactly what O'Meara had been doing voluntarily for nearly two years, he would appear to have been extremely anxious to condemn himself out of his own mouth. He also said it was his practice to forget the conversations of patients on leaving their room. <sup>1</sup> If so, it was a custom more honoured by him in the breach than in the observance, seeing he had been in the habit of guarding against this customary

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. ii. p. 242.

forgetfulness by hurrying to his room after a chat with the Emperor and carefully recording all that great man's remarks in his diary. Moreover, at a later period he did not scruple to publish for profit all Napoleon's sayings, which he had heard solely as physician ; and from time to time sent detailed narratives of the most confidential conversations with Napoleon to his friend Finlaison of the Admiralty, to be by that friend, as we have said, communicated in due course to the Ministers of the Crown !

And this Finlaison correspondence actually continued for some time after the tricky surgeon's fustian about the sacred duty of a physician, for the Governor was officially informed of the fact in a letter from Mr. Goulburn, dated 23rd of January, 1818, in which the writer says : " Lord Bathurst thinks it proper you should be informed that this correspondence is still kept up, and is so with his lordship's knowledge, for as the letters are received from Dr. O'Meara they are regularly submitted for Lord Bathurst's perusal. He has thought it advisable not to do anything which, by driving Dr. O'Meara to seek another channel of correspondence, might deprive Lord Bathurst of the knowledge of its contents and of the objects with which it is evident his communications are made."

Thus, we see, that O'Meara's position had become very awkward. He had declared open war against the Governor, and was therefore impossible as an English



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officer; while, by continuing his revelations of the inner life at Longwood, after he had indulged in heroics on the turpitude of such conduct, he had added hypocrisy to his disgraceful betrayal of the man to whom he posed as a devoted and incorruptible friend. It was evident that his sojourn on the island must be of short duration, and an occurrence shortly afterwards happened which materially hastened the inevitable result.

<sup>1</sup> On the 28th of July, 1817, the Corsican, Cipriani, Napoleon's *maître d'hôtel*, died after a short illness, and his death gave rise to the events to which we have just referred. He was buried in the country churchyard, and the Church of England burial service was read at the grave by the Rev. Mr. Boys, a Protestant clergyman. The funeral cortége was followed by Bertrand, Montholon, Sir Thomas Reade, Dr. O'Meara, several officers of the 66th Regiment, and many of the inhabitants, for general regret was felt for the death of this man, so far from the land of his birth.

<sup>2</sup> Napoleon was much pleased with the respect thus shown to his follower, although never once during the poor Corsican's illness had he visited the sick-room, which was under his own roof, and not more than twenty feet distant from his bath.

However, the Emperor, after the breath was out of his servant's body, showed some sense of the services

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. ii. p. 262, etc.

that had been rendered by the clergyman who had officiated at the obsequies, and wished his recognition to take a tangible form. <sup>1</sup> He therefore resolved to present Mr. Boys and another clergyman, the Rev. Mr. Vernon, who had also showed respect to the deceased, with silver snuff-boxes, a proceeding to which there could, of course, be no possible objection, provided it was carried out in a proper manner.

Now, one of the regulations imposed by the British Government for the supervision of the French exiles was that which strictly forbade presents being given either to or by Napoleon and the members of his suite without the cognizance and approval of the Governor. It is obvious that this rule was highly necessary, for had it not been laid down, and stringently enforced, it is easy to see the power of corruption which would have been placed in Napoleon's hands. He was well provided with funds, and in a small island such as St. Helena, with a large black population, and traders more intent on gain than honour, a judicious distribution of gold might have seriously imperilled the safe custody of the prisoners.

There is not the slightest doubt that had the Governor's permission been requested for the proposed gifts, it would readily have been granted. There was therefore no earthly reason why that simple and straightfor-

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. iii. p. 8, etc.

ward course should not have been followed. <sup>1</sup> Unluckily, Napoleon placed the matter in the hands of O'Meara, to whom a simple and straightforward course was repugnant, where underhand trickery could be employed. O'Meara, who was well acquainted with the regulation, gratified his mania for intrigue, and his instinct of defiance of authority, by taking the snuff-box to Mr. Boys on the eve of his departure for England, and the reverend gentleman unthinkingly accepted it. Mr. Vernon, however, with a just appreciation of the circumstances, declined to receive his, except through the legitimate channel, and on hearing that Mr. Boys had accepted the gift direct from O'Meara, wrote to his fellow-clergyman, pointing out the gross impropriety of the proceeding, upon which Mr. Boys at once caused the snuff-box to be returned to the surgeon, with a note that he would be glad to receive it if it came in the regular way.

On being informed of this fresh act of contumacy, the Governor quite properly resolved to adopt rigorous methods with O'Meara, and informed him that he would in future be subjected to the same regulations as were enforced in the case of Napoleon and his household. This was inevitable, for O'Meara had ceased to act as a British officer, having now identified himself entirely with the exiles, and adopted all their tricky shifts and devices to flout the English Government and harass

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. iii. p. 8, etc.

the Governor. As he had become an avowed French partisan, he could not complain of being treated as such.

It was on the 10th of April, 1817, that this curtailment of the surgeon's opportunities for mischief came into force. <sup>1</sup> O'Meara thereupon wrote to Bertrand that as it was impossible for him to sacrifice his character and rights as a British subject to the desire of being of service to the "chief personage" at Longwood, he had formed the resolution to quit the island. He then despatched a letter to the Governor, tendering his resignation, and demanding permission to return to England; following this up by violating the Governor's orders not to leave Longwood without permission, by a visit to The Briars, where Admiral Plampin was residing. The Admiral, however, instructed his Secretary to inform O'Meara that he could not sanction his disobedience by receiving him, but that if he had any communication to make, he must write and obtain his (the Admiral's) direction to wait on him. O'Meara answered that he considered himself a naval officer, and not amenable to the orders of the Governor, much less obliged to obey an "illegal" one.

On the same day Bertrand sent for Major Gorrequer and bitterly complained of the Governor's act, and said that in driving away the Emperor's physician the design could be recognized, which Sir Hudson had long mani-

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. iii. p. 9.

fested, of assassinating him. On hearing this, Gorrequer rose from his seat saying he could not tolerate such language, and Bertrand added, "At all events, you will repeat to the Governor what I have just said," on which the Major at once withdrew. To a letter written to him by Bertrand making the same disgraceful charge, Sir Hudson replied with calmness and dignity, that O'Meara had tendered his resignation, and if it had not already taken place, that had been solely out of consideration for the arguments advanced by Bertrand, and owing to the difficulty of supplying O'Meara's place by any other person in the island not objected to by Napoleon himself.

<sup>1</sup> The Governor now formally accepted O'Meara's resignation, and informed him, through Reade, that if Napoleon was willing to receive advice from any other medical man in the island, he would consent to O'Meara's quitting Longwood immediately; but if not, it would be proper that he should remain until his resignation was received in England, or some arrangement could be made for filling his place.

It was important that Napoleon should not be left for a moment without medical attention. The family disease which ultimately carried him off was beginning to make itself manifest. He slept badly; his appetite was failing; his colour was ghastly, and the pain which he suffered in his right side had become worse. O'Meara,

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. iii. p. 11.

who seems to have been as incompetent as a doctor as he was unreliable in other respects, diagnosed the complaint as *hepatitis*, but Dr. Baxter expressed surprise that the disorder, if it were what O'Meara supposed, should remain stationary so long. It was afterwards proved, of course, that O'Meara was utterly wrong in his opinion as to the nature of the disease; but that opinion may have been expressed in order to sustain the assertion that Napoleon was killed by the climate of St. Helena, which was part of his case against the British Ministry and the Governor, and did not die from the family taint, which, of course, would have destroyed that fiction.

The order with regard to O'Meara had come into force on the 10th of April, 1818, and on the 14th he waited on Napoleon, <sup>1</sup>who positively refused any longer to avail himself of his services as medical attendant. A tedious and futile correspondence had meanwhile been going on between the Governor and the surgeon, which ended in O'Meara proposing, in view of the state of the Emperor's health, that he should remain at Longwood until the arrival of an answer from England, to Lowe's despatch on his behaviour. Sir Hudson, taking into consideration that Napoleon not only refused to accept O'Meara's services, but obstinately declined to see any other doctor, decided to meet the grave danger that would result if the Emperor were to become seriously ill in the absence of professional advice, by withdrawing

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. iii. p. 12.

the order placing O'Meara on the same footing as the French exiles. He accordingly notified the insubordinate doctor that he would be restored to his former privileges until instructions were received from England regarding him. He would continue, however, to be considered as an officer employed and paid by the British Government, and subject to the Governor's authority and control.

Another incident occurred which further shows the mire of mendacity in which O'Meara delighted to wallow.

<sup>1</sup> On the 12th of June, 1818, a long conversation took place between him and the Governor, who called his attention to a sealed letter from Napoleon to Lord Liverpool, which he (Lowe) had transmitted to England. A copy of this letter was at the same time smuggled out of the island, and published in the English newspapers. The Governor asked O'Meara if he knew anything respecting the mode of transmission or by whom the copy had been sent. To this O'Meara replied, "No, sir, I know nothing whatever about it." He was then asked whether he knew of any channel by which it might have been sent. The answer was, "No, I do not, I can suspect no one." Would he state that on oath? O'Meara retorted that this was an insult, and that a person whose word was not worthy of credit did not deserve any more credit on oath. Did he know of any paper sent clandestinely to England in the June

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. iii. p. 21.

of the previous year? No, was the reply, he did not; this was the first he had heard of such a thing.

Alas! the fatal Finlaison epistles are again available to convict this pretty specimen of a British officer of deliberate lying. Writing to his friend in November, 1817, he said, "I enclose you a correct copy of Bonaparte's answer to Lord Bathurst's speech, the original of which was delivered to Sir Hudson Lowe on the 7th of October, sealed, and directed to Lord Liverpool." As to the episode of June, 1817, he wrote to Finlaison on the 29th of that month, secretly enclosing a copy of the Emperor's observations on the restrictions imposed upon him!

By this time O'Meara's insults and defiance of the Governor were a public scandal in the island. He had been all along an honorary member of the mess of the 66th Regiment, but Lieut.-Col. Lascelles thought it was high time that his presence should no longer pollute the dinner-table. <sup>1</sup> He therefore wrote him on the 23rd of June, 1818, that his honorary membership must cease. What followed is described by the Assistant-Surgeon of the 66th in Henry's *Events of a Military Life*. After briefly describing O'Meara's malpractices, which included <sup>2</sup> the repeating at Longwood of confidential conversations heard at the mess, he goes on to explain that the Colonel's intimation to O'Meara had been

<sup>1</sup> *Events of a Military Life*, Henry, vol. ii. p. 40.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 41.



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sent without consulting the other officers, which had caused some dissatisfaction, as O'Meara, a genial Irishman, was well liked. O'Meara ignored the Colonel's letter, and presenting himself as usual at the dinner-table, appealed to the seven officers who happened to be present [whether his conduct had not always been marked with propriety while he was associating with them, and blarneyed them into giving him a certificate to that effect. The officers, good, honest fellows, being quite in the dark as to his scandalous conduct, and being, no doubt, in a postprandial state of geniality, readily wrote the testimonial "across the walnuts and the wine," saying that the surgeon's deportment had always been most gentlemanly, and away went the wily doctor with the document in his pocket. <sup>1</sup>As Mr. Henry remarks, it was a regrettable, though good-natured action, on the part of the officers, for this testimonial was adroitly made use of as one of the main props of the edifice of falsehoods built up afterwards under the title of *A Voice from St. Helena*. <sup>2</sup>"A specious but sophistical book, full of misrepresentations," is Henry's description of it.

At this juncture Lieut.-Col. Dodgin was appointed to the command of the 66th. He at once convened a meeting of the whole of his officers, and they unanimously agreed to forward a letter to Sir G. Bingham, their

<sup>1</sup> *Events of a Military Life*, vol. ii. p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 41.

Colonel, explaining that the letter to O'Meara had been written without their knowledge and consent. They requested the Colonel to inform the Governor of this, so that should O'Meara publish the first letter, Sir Hudson might have the means of exculpating the body of the officers of the regiment from any blame that might attach to them in the eyes of the Commander-in-Chief. This declaration was signed by twenty-seven officers ; while the seven officers who had thoughtlessly signed the first letter wrote on the 6th of November, 1818, to Lieut.-Col. Dodgin that they had only written it out of politeness, and in total ignorance of any imputation of improper conduct being attached to O'Meara's character ; but that from circumstances which had since come to their knowledge, they regretted having done so. At a subsequent period, when O'Meara had grossly misused the letter of character in a communication to the Admiralty of the 28th of October, 1818, the officers again addressed Sir G. Bingham, reiterating their explanation of how the testimonial had come to be written, and expressing their feelings of surprise and indignation that it should have had such a false and scandalous construction placed upon it by the recipient. It had been intended merely as a mark of common civility, and they begged the Colonel to assure Sir Hudson that the whole assertions and imputations contained in the latter part of the extracts were wanton and malicious falsehoods.

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<sup>1</sup> The cup of O'Meara's rascalities was filled to the brim by the revelations made by General Gourgaud on his arriving in London. He expressed to Mr. Goulburn the conviction that although the situation of Longwood made it capable of being well protected by sentries, there would not be much difficulty in eluding their vigilance, and that in point of fact, an escape from the island appeared to him in no degree impracticable. The subject had frequently been discussed, and suggestions as to the best mode of effecting escape invited from individual members of the household. The General also said that Napoleon's ill-health had been much exaggerated. O'Meara was the dupe of that influence which the Emperor always exercised over those with whom he had frequent intercourse.

Gourgaud's communications gave the finishing touch to the growing suspicions entertained by the Minister of O'Meara's fidelity; and Lord Bathurst resolved to withdraw the refusal he had returned to Sir Hudson's previous request for the surgeon's removal. On the 16th of May, 1818, he instructed the Governor to dismiss O'Meara forthwith, and to forbid him any further communication with Longwood. <sup>2</sup> In a private letter to Lowe, his lordship pointed out that this step would probably create a great sensation, and that the Governor must make public the substance of his instructions, so as

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. iii, p. 38, etc.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

to show clearly that the dismissal was due to Gourgaud, and not to his differences with O'Meara. In another despatch Lord Bathurst instructed Sir Hudson to impose such restrictions on communications between Napoleon's followers and the inhabitants of St. Helena as might appear to him necessary to prevent their continuance. A secret correspondence had been discovered between Longwood and Bahia in Brazil, viâ the Cape. In April a packet of letters from the French at Longwood had been delivered in London by a person who had arrived there from Brazil, and Lord Bathurst informed the Governor that a rescue had been in contemplation by a party of French and other adventurers proceeding from Pernambuco to St. Helena.

On the 25th of July, 1818, O'Meara was accordingly notified to leave Longwood at once, without holding any further communication whatever with the inmates, and Admiral Plampin received instructions as to his destination when he should quit the island. <sup>1</sup> Defiant to the last, O'Meara disobeyed these orders, and was closeted in close conference with Napoleon for two hours. Lieut.-Col. Wynyard, the chief Military Secretary, reprimanded him sharply for this fresh evidence of insubordination, and O'Meara insolently retorted, "Yes, I don't acknowledge the authority." Wynyard thereupon told him bluntly that he had ceased to belong to the Longwood establishment, and was

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 48.

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to pack up his traps with all speed and quit the premises for James Town. The Governor sent the Marshal of the Island to inform him that he must clear out of St. Helena at once. He was put on board the *Griffon*, which sailed for England on the 2nd of August, 1818.

O'Meara did not wait until his arrival in England to begin his campaign of calumny. <sup>1</sup> At Ascension he manifested his fiendish hatred of the Governor by charging him with having prompted him (O'Meara) to murder the Emperor. On this, Rear-Admiral Plampin wrote to Lowe the following breezy note: "Young Blackwood . . . who is a midshipman on board the *Favourite*, and is at present for two or three days at The Briars, tells me that that impudent vagabond O'Meara said publicly at Ascension that had he obeyed your orders, Napoleon Bonaparte would not then have been alive—a precious rascal this to talk of prosecuting for defamation!"

<sup>2</sup> On the 28th of October, 1818, O'Meara wrote the letter to the Admiralty which so roused the indignation of the officers of the 66th. It was an epitome of the libels afterwards elaborated in *A Voice from St. Helena*, and contained the frightful accusation first made at Ascension. The passage in the letter which contains this abominable charge runs as follows: "In the third interview which Sir Hudson Lowe had with Napoleon Bonaparte in May, 1816, he proposed to the latter to send me away

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. iii. p. 96.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 118.

and replace me by Baxter, who had been for several years surgeon with him in the Corsican Rangers. This proposal was rejected with indignation by Napoleon Bonaparte, on the grounds of its being an indelicate proposition to substitute an army surgeon for a private surgeon of his own choice.

"Failing in this attempt, Sir Hudson Lowe adopted the resolution of manifesting the greatest confidence in me by loading me with civilities ; inviting me constantly to dine with him ; conversing hours together with me alone, both in his own house and grounds, and at Longwood, either in my room or under the trees and elsewhere. On some of these occasions he made to me observations upon the benefit that would result from the death of Napoleon Bonaparte, of which event he spoke in a manner, which, considering his situation and mine, was painfully distressing to me."

There was no mistaking the purport of this wicked innuendo, which at last exhausted the forbearance of the Admiralty, and O'Meara promptly received a reply of which the material part was as follows : <sup>1</sup> "It is impossible to doubt the meaning which this passage is intended to convey, and my Lords can as little doubt that the insinuation is a calumnious falsehood ; but if it were true, and if so horrible a suggestion were made to you, directly or indirectly, it was your bounden duty not to have lost a moment in communicating it to the

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. iii. pp. 115, 116.

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Admiral, on the spot, or to the Secretary of State, or to their Lordships.

“An overture so monstrous in itself, and so deeply involving, not merely the personal character of the Governor, but the honour of the Nation . . . should not have been reserved in your breast for two years, to be produced at last, not (so it would appear) from a sense of public duty, but in furtherance of your personal hostility against the Governor.

“Either the charge is in the last degree false and calumnious, or you can have no possible excuse for having hitherto suppressed it.

“In either case, and without adverting to the general tenour of your conduct, as stated in your letter, my Lords consider you to be an improper person to continue in His Majesty’s service, and they have directed your name to be erased from the list of naval surgeons accordingly.”

When Montholon afterwards referred to this abominable charge in a conversation with Montchenu, the French Commissioner, the latter expressed his entire disbelief, on which Montholon responded, “We do not believe it ourselves, *but it is always well to say so.*”

Theodore Hook published a defence of Sir Hudson to which O’Meara replied. <sup>1</sup> In order to poison the minds of the inhabitants, O’Meara endeavoured, with characteristic trickery, to smuggle eighteen sets of what he called

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. iii. pp. 185, 186.

his *Exposition* into St. Helena. Each set was enclosed in a sealed packet to deceive the captain of the ship that conveyed them into the belief that they were tracts, so that they were sent ashore without the manifest required by the regulations, and duly delivered. The scheme completely failed, however, as on becoming aware of the nature of the publication, each set was returned to the publishers by the respective recipients, with the pages uncut.

Such, then, was the man upon whose testimony the cruel and abominable charges against Sir Hudson Lowe mainly rest. His colossal falsehoods pass current to this day as undoubted truths, for the glamour of Napoleon's bloodstained career has blinded the eyes of the multitude (who are prone to accept as established proof what is persistently asserted) to the facts of the case ; and the average man has neither the time nor the patience to examine the evidence for himself. The fury of faction ; the perversions of subsidized or prejudiced scribes ; the emotion of poets ; even the praiseworthy instinct of Englishmen to look with indulgence on a fallen foe, have all combined to perpetuate this fabric of falsehood.



## CHAPTER XXIV

### MEDICAL AND CLERICAL

THE disappearance of Barry O'Meara made it necessary to appoint a new medical adviser for the Emperor, and here a serious difficulty presented itself. Throughout his whole career Napoleon had constantly expressed himself in the most contemptuous terms of the medical profession, and his affection for O'Meara was in no degree owing to his confidence in the surgeon's professional skill. It sprang, of course, from his utility in the campaign against the English Ministry and the Governor. Any doctor appointed by Sir Hudson might be confidently expected to meet with his determined opposition, and this was soon found to be the case.

<sup>1</sup> The appointment of Dr. Verling, assistant-surgeon in the Royal Artillery, was first tried, for as he had come out with Napoleon on the *Northumberland*, it was hoped that he might prove *persona grata* to the exile. On his appointment Dr. Verling asked O'Meara to show

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. iii. p. 48.

him his medical journal, which was the only source from which could be ascertained the constitution of the patient and the nature of his complaints, without a knowledge of which it was, of course, impossible to arrive at a proper decision as to treatment, but with this request O'Meara refused to comply. Moreover, the Emperor obstinately refused to accept the services, either of Verling, or any other doctor selected by the Governor, and he applied for a French or Italian medical man.

<sup>1</sup> In August, 1818, the Emperor's uncle, Cardinal Fesch, made application to the Prince Regent for permission to send a Catholic priest to St. Helena to act as chaplain to his nephew. Lord Bathurst replied that there was no objection to this, provided that the reverend gentleman should reside at Longwood, and make the usual declaration of submission to all the regulations. At the same time Lord Bathurst informed Fesch that Napoleon had asked for a French surgeon and a cook, the selection of whom his lordship would leave to the Cardinal.

There seemed to be a mischievous imp at work in all the appointments to Napoleon's household. We have seen how Las Cases had to be removed, how Gourgaud was tormented into leaving, and how Barry O'Meara had been expelled for scandalous conduct. It might have been hoped that destiny would be more indulgent

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. iii. p. 94.

in respect of the new-comers. Unfortunately, except in the case of the new cook and *maître d'hôtel* (for that functionary had also to be newly appointed), the people selected by Fesch could not possibly have been more unsuitable. The new surgeon, the two chaplains, the *maître d'hôtel* (Causal) and the cook (Chaudelin) arrived at St. Helena on the 20th of September, 1819. All signed the required declaration, and reached Longwood the same evening. <sup>1</sup> The doctor was a certain Antommarchi, who soon proved to be as incompetent as a physician and as hostile to the authorities as O'Meara himself. From the very first he became the obsequious slave of Napoleon, ready to misinterpret everything to the disadvantage of England. Even before he landed he gave an indication of his perversity. Like all connected with Longwood, he subsequently wrote a book, which for all-round lying eclipsed the achievements of all the others. <sup>2</sup> He tells us that when he had his first view of the island, he exclaimed, Yonder was the Emperor, there English cruelty persecuted its victim with relentless fury! There the sovereigns of Europe were taking revenge upon that great man for "the errors of his generosity." His state of mind is further displayed by his idiotic suspicions of a fleet of fishing-boats which was sailing in the vicinity of the ship on its

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. pp. 182, 202, etc.

<sup>2</sup> *Derniers Moments de Napoléon*, Antommarchi, vol. i. pp. 40, 41 (Paris, 1898).

reaching the island. This, according to Antommarchi, was part of a "plot," hatched by the treacherous Governor to entrap the new-comers into sending some letter or paper clandestinely ashore! <sup>1</sup> His capacity for barefaced lying is significantly shown by his description of the alleged interview he had with the English Ministers on his return to London. According to this veracious narrative, one of the Ministers remarked, "What signifies, after all, the death of General Bonaparte? It rids us of an implacable enemy, and delivers him from a painful situation in which he would have remained for ever." "The assurances given to us by the Governor," answered Antommarchi, "were not of that nature." "The Governor! the Governor!" exclaimed the Minister contemptuously. "Your Excellency," responded Antommarchi, "does not do him justice; he was a strict follower of his instructions." "If so," replied the other, "why did he not cause the body of Bonaparte to be thrown into lime? The idol would then have been completely destroyed, and we should the sooner have done with him."

Was ever such a transparently concocted fiction, glaring in its preposterous absurdity, sought to be palmed off on a credulous public? The bare idea that an English Minister would have conversed in this way with a vainglorious mountebank like Antommarchi is

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. iii. p. 203.

enough to stamp the whole thing with the impress of mendacity.

This surgeon soon became an adept in the trade of grievance-mongering and grumbling. <sup>1</sup> Having broken the regulations as to the limits imposed on the movements of the Longwood household, he bitterly complained when he was very properly stopped by the sentries. Shortly after his arrival he invited to dinner the members of his profession resident in the island. They, one and all, excused themselves on the ground of prior engagements. He made this also a ground of complaint against Sir Hudson, ascribing the refusals to "the universal terror impressed on the minds of the inhabitants." The Governor told him that he had nothing whatever to do with the matter, and that the doctors knew their own affairs best; but that nothing could justify the most improper and indecent attack made on himself. He regretted Antommarchi's readiness to seek the first forced occasion to hold an irritating and insulting style of language towards him. The surgeon, he added, could have had no opportunity to trace the real causes which influenced the conduct of individuals on that island in their relations with Longwood, and without that, the reflection was as unjust as it was offensive.

Antommarchi not only adopted this attitude of extreme hostility to the Governor immediately on

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. iii. p. 253.

arriving at St. Helena, but he soon showed that vain as O'Meara had been, he entirely eclipsed the Irishman in that defect. He also proved to be a most incompetent doctor. Napoleon's health was becoming much worse, and Antommarchi showed himself utterly unequal to the situation. Napoleon from the first displayed an entire want of confidence in his skill and knowledge, and at last refused to take any more of his medicines, which he said only made him worse. <sup>1</sup>The Emperor was a most exacting patient, and required his attendant to explain all his methods, which Antommarchi was quite incapable of doing. This increased Napoleon's contempt for him, and later on this contempt grew into strong, personal aversion, which was intensified by Antommarchi's want of polish, due to his never having been accustomed to move in good society. <sup>2</sup>His manners were frivolous and presuming; he was in the habit of giving himself the most ridiculous airs of self-importance, and on his arrival seemed to believe the whole island was at his command. At last Napoleon conceived an absolute hatred for him, and could not endure to have him in his sight. His diagnosis of the Emperor's malady was utterly wrong, for he asserted it to be an affection of the organs of digestion and the heart, whereas we know very well what it really was.

<sup>2</sup> Antommarchi, on his part, found his situation unendurable, and applied for leave to return to Europe,

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 254.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 275.

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as he told the Governor that he could be of no further use, and could stand no longer, either the Emperor's violent temper, or the menial services required of him.

<sup>1</sup> Nor did the selection of the Abbés Buonavita and Vignali as the Emperor's advisers prove more judicious. The former was a very worthy old man, but not the sort to meet Napoleon's requirements. He had been a missionary priest in Mexico, and could talk of nothing but his experiences there. He was no theologian, and therefore quite incapable of answering the Emperor's searching questions on that subject, or of holding his own in controversy with the keenest intellect of the age. Napoleon therefore soon became as dissatisfied with him as he was with Antommarchi. <sup>2</sup>As to Vignali, the other cleric, he was an excellent young man, but of abysmal ignorance, and the two together were about as unsuitable persons as could well be imagined to battle with a life-long sceptic like Napoleon. Montholon humorously summed up the man of medicine and the two churchmen by saying that Antommarchi could talk of nothing but surgery; Buonavita could talk of nothing but Mexico, and Vignali could talk about nothing at all. In these circumstances Napoleon asked the Governor to get him supplied with new ministrants to his bodily and spiritual wants, but the choice must on no account be left to his family. He said he had great reason to complain of the choice they had already made, and he

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 254.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 255.

suggested that the matter should be left to the discretion of the King of France and his ministers. The priest must be a man of education and learning, and forty to fifty years old.

<sup>1</sup> The Governor told Antommarchi that he must have time to deliberate on his request for permission to leave the island, and as a matter of fact the surgeon remained at Longwood until Napoleon's death, which was now rapidly approaching, rendering his further stay there superfluous.

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. iii. p. 277.



## CHAPTER XXV

### HIDE AND SEEK

**A**FTER the removal of O'Meara's evil influence the relations between Longwood and the Governor became, as might have been expected, much more amicable. To show to what an extent that influence prejudiced Napoleon against Sir Hudson, the following incident will suffice.

<sup>1</sup> It was deemed desirable to protect the grounds at Longwood from the intrusion of cattle and goats by erecting around them an iron fence. O'Meara told the Emperor that a ship had arrived with 400,000 livres of iron fencing for the 'purpose of hemming him in, and enclosing his house within fifteen yards' distance all round ; in fact to form an iron cage round him. In consequence of this, when Napoleon saw the railing being put up along the lawn in front of the new building (for another house was erected at Longwood by the British Government to give improved accommodation

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 261.

to the exiles) he became exasperated, exclaiming, "There is the cage—O'Meara was right. I am going to be imprisoned within an iron railing!" The absurdity of the Emperor's idea is only exceeded by the wickedness of O'Meara in suggesting it to him. This is Montholon's account of what actually occurred. The version which O'Meara palmed off on the Governor was very different, in fact the exact opposite. He told Sir Hudson that Napoleon, having got this bee in his bonnet, he (O'Meara) had enlightened the Emperor as to the real object for which the railing was intended, and explained to him that it was similar to the protection ordinarily placed around the gardens of English country houses!

Unhappily, the truce established between Longwood and Plantation House was not of long duration, for there was another marplot at work, to sow afresh the seeds of discord. This was the "Grand Maréchal," Bertrand, who now stepped into the void left by O'Meara and fanned the flames of Napoleon's hatred of Lowe on every possible occasion. Montholon, although of course no friend to Sir Hudson, had sufficient sense to see the folly of the war which was continually carried on; and did his best (so he averred, at all events) to restrain his master's impolitic pugnacity. He advised Napoleon to moderate his attitude towards the Governor, but his efforts as peacemaker were continually neutralized by Bertrand, who appealed to the Emperor with such

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words as <sup>1</sup> “ *Mais, Sire ! votre gloire, votre nom !* ” and his fellow-exile’s advice immediately fell to the ground.

The strife was therefore soon renewed. One of the most insistent demands of the British Ministers was that Lowe should satisfy himself by ocular evidence twice every day of Napoleon’s actual presence at Longwood. <sup>2</sup> The orderly officer was therefore positively instructed that he *must* satisfy himself, by hook or by crook, of this fact. The poor man led a dog’s life in endeavouring to fulfil this duty, for the Emperor was resolved to prevent its accomplishment by all the means in his power. It was a most undignified game of hide-and-seek on both sides, but what was the Governor to do ? Despatch after despatch was received by him from Lord Bathurst emphasizing the absolute necessity for the rule being enforced. Sir Hudson was determined to go to all extremes in avoiding the necessity for a forcible intrusion on Napoleon’s privacy ; and yet the obstinacy with which the exile immured himself for months in the interior of Longwood seemed to make a continuance of this forbearance impossible. To make matters worse, Montholon actually boasted of the defeat of the Governor’s attempts, and defied him to say that he knew for certain that Napoleon was actually at Longwood, or had been there for the last two months.

To show in what a dilemma Sir Hudson was placed by

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. iii. p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 174.

Napoleon's undignified policy of concealment, let us quote Lord Bathurst's despatch of the 28th of September, 1818: "From this assertion of Montholon, I am confirmed in what I had been led to apprehend by certain passages in your despatch, that you have, from feelings of delicacy towards Bonaparte, and unwillingness to intrude on his privacy, forborne enforcing the regulation mentioned in your despatch of the 12th of May, 1816, the purport of which was that it should be distinctly ascertained twice a day beyond possible doubt that General Bonaparte was actually at Longwood.

"Although I duly appreciate the motives which have led to this forbearance on your part, and am disposed to intrude as little as possible upon those habits of seclusion which General Bonaparte has latterly imposed on himself, yet I confess that it appears to me so essential that the security of his being actually at Longwood should be regularly and daily ascertained, that if this were duly enforced, I should have less objection to dispense with some of the restrictions of which General Bonaparte has complained. You will therefore propose to General Bonaparte the regular admission of the orderly officer to a personal interview between the hours of nine and eleven every morning and evening. If this be accepted, you are authorized to relax other restrictions, so far as to admit of his taking exercise on foot, in carriage or on horseback through the greater part of the island, unattended by a British officer

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(subject always to the regulations as to hours at present in force)."

The despatch goes on to say that if Napoleon refused to accept these terms, no alterations were to be made in the existing regulations, and the Governor was to adopt such measures as he might think most effectual to prevent his being deceived as to the Emperor being actually at Longwood, taking care always, in adopting those measures, to show all possible consideration for the feelings and habits of the exile, not inconsistent with the necessary discharge of a painful duty.

We see from the above that Sir Hudson had run the risk of incurring the censure of the Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, in his anxiety to deal considerately and gently with the prisoner. What a contrast his actual conduct presents to the common idea of him, derived from the deliberate slanders of unscrupulous Bonapartists, as a cruel, callous, inhuman tyrant, whose greatest delight was to torment and insult his hapless victim !

These attempts at an arrangement were unfortunately fruitless. Napoleon persisted in his determination not to show himself, and resorted to the most childish and undignified expedients to conceal himself from view.

<sup>1</sup> Among other devices, he had holes made in the windows of the billiard-room, through which he could see

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. iii. p. 157.

those outside by means of a spy-glass, while himself remaining concealed from their observation.

The unfortunate orderly officer, Captain Nicholls, was at his wits' end to carry out his duty. He had not seen the Emperor for two weeks, and was yet urged to make his reports twice a day. The situation became as impossible as it was farcical, and on the 3rd of October, 1818, the Governor, accompanied by Major Gorrequer, called on de Montholon to endeavour to put an end to it.

De Montholon was an extremely slippery gentleman to deal with. While Bertrand was brutal, de Montholon was the personification of politeness, but his very suavity made him all the more difficult to handle.

<sup>1</sup> A long conversation ensued in which de Montholon denied that the Emperor was concealing himself. On the contrary, he was in the habit of coming to the window and drawing back the curtains, exposing himself to view. The Governor replied that on that very day the orderly officer reported that he had no certainty of the Emperor being at Longwood. Delicacy had been pushed to extremes. Captain Nicholls had always endeavoured to perform his duty in a manner not disagreeable to Napoleon's feelings. De Montholon said that if he mentioned the matter, his master flew into a passion, and the more he expostulated with him the more obstinate he became. It was ill-health and bad

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. iii. p. 161.

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weather that kept him indoors, not a desire to hide himself. Napoleon was a man, said the Count, who the more that cannon were fired at him, the more stubborn he became. It was only by gentle means that anything could be done. "But," replied Lowe, "I don't fire cannon at him; on the contrary, every one knows how far I have been pushed on this subject, by refraining till now from insisting on the point." De Montholon rejoined that he quite admitted this, and rendered the Governor full justice in this respect. Napoleon himself had said, "Well, he does his duty." The Count added that he would rather Sir Hudson should write to him, and he would send his answer in like manner.

Lowe then remarked on the false impression Napoleon appeared to have about the English. <sup>1</sup> De Montholon replied that it was due to Las Cases, who was no doubt the author of much mischief, for his previous residence in England and knowledge of the language, though imperfect, had given him an influence over the Emperor which was never exerted for any good purpose, and his misrepresentations of English customs and modes of acting, if not wilful, were ridiculous. He had also done much harm by misinterpreting expressions in conversations, and on one occasion, even Napoleon declared that he was satisfied the Count had not sufficiently understood the language to avoid misleading him. This is

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. iii. p. 68.

borne out by the following significant entry in Gourgaud's *Journal Inédit de Sainte Hélène* (vol. 1. chap. vi. p. 317), referring to Las Cases: "*C'est un simple intrigant, un peureux, un hypocrite, qui n'a commis que des sottises en excitant l'Empereur à se créer des illusions sur tout.*"

<sup>1</sup> As to O'Meara, de Montholon had from the first been convinced that he was giving accounts to the Governor of all that happened at Longwood. As he lodged close to de Montholon, who saw him always writing from the moment he entered his room, he (the Count) was strongly suspicious of what the surgeon was about.

Nothing came from this interview, nor from another which the two had on the 5th of October, at which de Montholon was as plausible as ever; shrugged his shoulders and expressed open-eyed surprise that Nicholls had still been unable to catch a glimpse of the exile.

<sup>2</sup> He had told Napoleon what Lowe had said, and received for a reply, "What would he have? Does he want me to go out when I am ill? I do not hide myself, and have changed none of my habits, and don't mean to. When fine weather returns and my health improves, I will go out as usual. If it be a new regulation, let them inform me in writing." The Governor replied that it was no innovation, but there now seemed to be a system established to prevent the orderly officer from seeing Napoleon. Whenever Captain Nicholls was perceived, the blinds were drawn, and all opportunity

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. iii. p. 68.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 69, 70.



of getting a glimpse of him thus prevented. De Montholon again replied that there was no design on the part of the Emperor to conceal himself. He (de Montholon) had spoken to him the other day on the matter and the attempt had ended in a "scene," Napoleon exclaiming, "Well then, they want to assassinate me!" He had always that idea in his head.

To this the Governor replied that those expressions did no good; on the contrary, Napoleon did himself harm by them. His (Lowe's) character was too well known for any one to imagine that he would take delight in persecuting the Emperor. It was not possible for him to show greater delicacy and care to avoid anything that might be disagreeable, than by coming to de Montholon twice to see if there were any means of arriving at an arrangement instead of writing officially. What could he say beyond this—that the orders of his Government were that he should satisfy himself twice a day of the Emperor's actual presence, and that it was necessary he should cause these orders to be punctually executed. He had come to try and avoid more extreme measures. The conversation ended by the Governor saying, "I do not pretend, M. le Comte, to insist upon Napoleon Bonaparte receiving visits. He is master of his own interior to receive those only whom he pleases. I do not interfere in the least with this, but the orderly officer is charged with a duty of great responsibility, and he must have the means to perform it."

<sup>1</sup> Two days later Major Gorrequer called at de Montholon's request, with the same negative result ; and the day after, the Governor again visited him, to correct certain misapprehensions which, from the Major's report, the Count appeared to have conceived with regard to the rule as to seeing Napoleon daily being an "innovation." The Governor showed de Montholon two papers which conclusively proved that the regulation had been made by Admiral Cockburn previous to Sir Hudson's arrival in the island, and on this point the Count expressed himself as quite satisfied. It would be wearisome to describe each of these interviews ; they are merely repetitions of the same expostulations on the one side and evasions on the other. But they led to no result. The passive resistance continued, and the orderly officer's life became an intolerable burden to him in consequence.

There is only one matter that deserves to be mentioned, as it throws another gleam of light on O'Meara's double-dyed treachery. <sup>2</sup> De Montholon stated that one of the main causes of Napoleon's hatred of the Governor was O'Meara's having told him that Sir Hudson had ordered him to repeat everything he heard, and to give an account of all that happened at Longwood ; in fact, he was to be a spy ; and that because he had refused, the Governor had forbidden him to speak to them on any subject but medicine, and only to "feel

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. iii. p. 71.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 76.

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their pulses." Sir Hudson replied that this was absolutely false, and the Count said he gave the fullest credit to the assurance. <sup>1</sup> The Governor then asked de Montholon what he would think of O'Meara when he heard of his pledge of secrecy to the Emperor, and his subsequent violation of the promise during a period of nearly two years. "Well then," replied the Count, "I would say that he was a rascal; that you have acted like a man of honour, and he like a man void of principle. But I was never the dupe of O'Meara. I saw clearly through all his manoeuvres. I knew he often wrote to you reports of conversations he had had with us."

On the following day, at another interview with the Governor, de Montholon said of O'Meara: <sup>2</sup> "He is just the man to be always placing himself in a false position; he cannot help it; he must be always stirring; always agitating; always doing something. He wanted to pick up some anecdotes, some information, some details; probably to make a book of them; to make some profit by them; to make money."

The same state of things still continued, and in February, 1819, Lord Bathurst again insisted on the orderly officer seeing the Emperor twice a day. But it was one thing to give these urgent directions from London and quite another to carry them out in St. Helena.

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. iii. p. 77.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 79.

There is a touch of grim humour in Captain Nicholls' diary, recording his efforts to perform his duty. On the 3rd of April, 1819, he writes: "Nearly twelve hours on my legs this day, trying to see Napoleon Bonaparte before I succeeded." Again on the 21st of July, "At least ten hours on my feet, walking about Longwood garden, but had no opportunity of seeing General Bonaparte. Weather so very bad, fear my health will be injured if this goes on." On the 25th, "Not able to get a sight; since 8 a.m. spent six or seven hours walking about Longwood garden."

From this purgatory the unhappy officer was released in October, 1819, by the sudden emergence of the exile from his hiding-place into the light of day. The Emperor began to walk about frequently, with the result that his health decidedly improved, his spirits became much better, and his relations with the Governor far more agreeable.

It may be easily imagined with what delight this salutary change was hailed by poor Captain Nicholls. The entry in his diary on the event is almost pathetic in its whole-hearted sincerity. <sup>1</sup> On the 29th of November, he writes: "General Bonaparte out early this morning, employed in his favourite garden with Count Montholon, the valets, Chinese gardeners, storemen, etc. The General in his morning gown, amidst his people, at

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. iii. p. 196.

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work directing them—takes a spade at times, and begins to put in seeds. Messages to me for carts, shovels, and spades. God send he may always continue in this humour during my residence at Longwood.”

Before closing this chapter, let us describe an occurrence which again displays the Governor's good-nature and chivalrous courtesy. Madame de Montholon having left the island, <sup>1</sup> Madame Bertrand naturally felt very lonely, particularly during the period of Napoleon's seclusion. She complained of this to Sir Hudson, who reminded her that he had consented, at her husband's suggestion, to a proposal that Bertrand should present a list of fifty persons for his (Lowe's) approval, who would be allowed to visit Longwood without a pass, upon the invitation of Napoleon. The Governor said the list not having been prepared, he had proposed to de Montholon to frame one, but the offer had never been accepted. He added that there had always been, among those frequenting his house, never less than twelve at liberty to visit Longwood without any pass from him. This number would now be augmented, and he would inform the persons comprehended in it that there would be no objection to their visits on his part.

Madame Bertrand immediately forwarded a list of names, which she begged the Governor to send to the orderly officer, with instructions to allow those persons

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. iii. pp. 183, 184.

to visit without a pass, and Sir Hudson courteously assented.

The Countess, by the way, won the goodwill and regard of all who knew her. She was very agreeable, and had been a handsome woman, and her presence must greatly have alleviated Napoleon's exile. Very different was her husband. His influence was always exerted to inflame Napoleon's irritation, and his behaviour to the Governor was consistently brutal and insulting. Lord Bathurst, in September, 1819, wrote that the conduct of Bertrand made it unfit for Sir Hudson to communicate with him any longer, and that if de Montholon went, he was to address himself to Buonavita, or either of the other two gentlemen who were going out with the chaplain.

It is worthy of note that the better relations which had latterly manifested themselves between the Governor and Napoleon were in no sense due to any alteration in the methods of the former regarding his charge. All the regulations which had been established with the sole object of preventing the exile's escape were still maintained, for they were absolutely necessary. So long as the one paramount purpose could be achieved, every effort was made by Lowe to alleviate the inevitable hardship of the Emperor's confinement. This, as we have shown, had been his line of conduct all along, and this it now continued to be. It was Napoleon himself who, by abandoning his puerile and vexa-

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tious opposition to an obviously reasonable and necessary regulation, enabled more satisfactory relations to be established between Longwood and Plantation House.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### THE SUBLIME AND THE RIDICULOUS

**N**APOLÉON'S conduct at St. Helena displayed, in a petty and contemptible manner, all the artifice and trickery which had characterized his career on the stupendous stage of European politics. We have shown by his letter to Junot the calculated treachery of which he was capable, on a colossal scale ; and his whole policy had been based upon an utter disregard of the elementary principles of honesty and fair dealing. His bulletins proved what an adept he was in unblushing mendacity, and his published letters contain damning evidence that no object was too mean to be the victim of his unparalleled tyranny.

Before a great public character can be assigned his proper position in the records of history, his career must be judged as a whole. It is not enough to consider him in the full blaze of glory ; the historian will attach an equal importance to his bearing under misfortune, for that is the real touchstone of greatness, and like other so-called great men, Napoleon Bonaparte lamentably fails when judged by this standard.



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In estimating greatness it is necessary, also, to consider the objects aimed at, the means used to attain them, and the final result. For twenty years Napoleon had been engaged in a bloody contest with the rest of Europe. He had pierced the centre of his foes—Austria and Prussia, the two great central Powers of the Continent, had been crushed, although England, the citadel of Freedom, still defied all his efforts. But on the right and left wings of this “far-flung battle line” he had been hopelessly worsted. Russia on the extreme right and the Iberian Peninsula on the extreme left, restored the fortunes of the field, and having thus given rallying time to the centre, left him beaten to the earth in 1814.

The object of Napoleon’s ambition was immense—nothing less than the establishment of a vast European Empire, with France as the dominant force, and Paris as the capital. A really great man would never have undertaken such a hopeless enterprise, because its conception involved the disregard of moral forces which must inevitably have triumphed over mere armed coercion. The undying spirit of nationality, which strangely enough he had made use of in his Italian campaigns, was bound to assert itself. Differences of race, of language, of religion, presented an insurmountable barrier to the fulfilment of this visionary scheme; which, by the way, was still further magnified by his dream of an Asiatic Empire as well, the realization

of which he attempted in his Egyptian campaign, only to be foiled by the maritime prowess of England. He therefore attempted to attain the manifestly unattainable, and in this aspect of his career entirely failed in the first condition of greatness.

As to the means adopted to accomplish this chimerical design, they were utterly inadequate to the task. Depending on France as the mainstay of his policy, he bled her nearly to death, and exhausted her resources, so that he had to fight the campaign which was decided at Leipzig with an army of boys; the manhood of France having been left to perish, during the previous year, amidst the snows of Russia. He forced to co-operate with him, as unwilling allies, the Powers of Central Europe which he had conquered, apparently forgetting that he was thus training in the art of war armies which would turn upon him at the first indication of failure. But perhaps the maddest part of his policy was that which was directed to crushing England by decrees against her commerce, a policy which was powerless against Britain so long as she held command of the seas, and, in so far as it was effective, brought ruin on the trading classes of the Continent, thus raising up against him a hatred of self-interest, perhaps as dangerous as the spirit of nationality itself.

The results of this insane ambition may be summed up in two words—St. Helena. After twenty years of bloodshed and treachery this was the lame and impotent

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conclusion. Of what avail was it to triumph at Austerlitz, only to be beaten at Moscow, or to win Jena and lose Waterloo? Did not Leipzig obliterate Wagram, and was not the gorgeous life of the Tuileries only the precursor of the paltry existence of Longwood. Even had he succeeded in building up his world-empire, what possible hope could there have been of its permanence? Is it for one moment to be doubted that the mighty fabric would have resolved itself into its primeval atoms under the feeble sway of his son; a sickly youth who died of consumption at the age of one-and-twenty? Such is the ineradicable vice of absolute government. In itself, under a despot of genius and enlightenment, it is probably the most efficient form of government known to mankind, though whether, in the long run, it is even then good for the governed is quite another matter. Its fatal weakness lies in the absence of any guarantee for the transmission of power to equally capable hands, and this has been the ruin of all the great empires in history.

On the day on which Napoleon Bonaparte allied himself in marriage with the most ancient imperial dynasty in Europe,<sup>1</sup> he appears to have contracted that most dangerous and hopeless of mental diseases, known scientifically as megalomania, and in vulgar parlance as "swelled head." It appears to have trans-

<sup>1</sup> *Rélation Circonscrite de la Campagne de Russie en 1812*, E. Lebaume, 4th Ed. p. 6, etc.

formed him from an Alexander into a Darius. Nothing else can account for his extraordinary folly in rushing to his destruction in the Moscow campaign ; in violation of all the rules of war, and against the remonstrances both of his civil and military advisers. Puffed up with more than Herodian vanity, he plunged into the savage deserts of Lithuania, <sup>1</sup> without any properly organized commissariat ; and, utterly disregarding the safety of his retreat, penetrated as far as Moscow, leaving Tschikagow with the Army of Moldavia to capture his military dépôts, and cut him off from all communication with the West. <sup>2</sup> By his extraordinary vacillation and lethargy, he allowed the Russian Army to escape at Borodino, as he afterwards allowed the Prussians to escape at Ligny. His whole conduct throughout the former battle showed that his military genius had been smothered under the imperial robes. <sup>3</sup> At the moment when the Russian line had been broken, and there only wanted a final effort to achieve a crushing victory, he refused, in spite of urgent entreaties, to let loose the Young Guard. Ney was goaded, by this unlooked-for refusal to strike the decisive blow, into an outburst of fury : "Have we," he burst forth,

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 32, etc.

<sup>2</sup> *Histoire de la Grande Armée pendant l'année 1812*, vol. i. p. 386, General Comte de Ségur.

<sup>3</sup> *The Sisters of Napoleon*, p. 160, Joseph Turquan. (Translation by W. R. H. Trowbridge.)

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“been brought all this distance to content ourselves with occupying a battlefield? What is the Emperor doing in the rear of the army? There he can only bring upon us defeat instead of victory. As he won’t make war himself, as he is no longer the general, as he wants to play the emperor on all occasions, let him return to the Tuileries, and leave us to be generals for him.” Driving Austria herself into the arms of the coalition in the campaign of 1813 by his overweening arrogance, he thus deprived himself even of the advantage he had gained by his imperial alliance, and completed the ruin begun by his mad aggression against Alexander.

The gaudy, meretricious glitter of his parvenu Court; his childish delight in attiring himself in theatrically-devised robes—the *ci-devant* Jacobin!—with absurd hats, decorated with ostrich feathers; the ridiculous hunting-parties at Fontainebleau, where the cavaliers and dames were rigged out in mountebank apparel suggestive of a travelling circus—all these extravagances and follies show a mental decrepitude which fully accounts for the painful descent from the zenith of Austerlitz to the nadir of Waterloo.

We have seen the absurd and undignified dodges to which Napoleon resorted in order to prevent the orderly officer from carrying out his duties, and the exemplary consideration and forbearance which the Governor displayed in the face of such continued provocation. It is a lamentable and deplorable spectacle

to witness the man who had made and unmade kings descending to the schoolboy expedient of looking with a spy-glass through holes bored in the windows of his billiard-room.

Like a schoolboy, however, he tired at last of this paltry game, and came to the conclusion that, like "Candide," he would be better employed in "cultivating his garden." As stated by Captain Nicholls, he threw himself with zest into his novel pursuit, and Lord Bathurst, when informed of this new departure, gave another proof of the desire of the British Government to alleviate his lot in every way in its power. His lordship, on the 2nd of June, 1820, wrote to the Governor offering to send plants from the Cape or any other British settlement, or from England, which Napoleon might desire to have for his <sup>1</sup> garden, and stated that no effort would be wanting to procure and forward them to St. Helena. He added that if Napoleon wished to have seeds or plants, either from the Cape or the Mauritius, Sir Hudson was authorized at once to address the Governor of those places, who would, Lord Bathurst was sure, lose no time in giving effect to the communication.

This plunge into horticulture, however, was the occasion for a curious display of the mental decrepitude into which the Emperor had fallen. <sup>2</sup> On the 20th of January, 1820, three goats belonging to the Countess

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. iii. p. 238.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 206.

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Bertrand strayed into the Longwood garden, and the great conqueror promptly shot one of them. The Countess, fearing a like fate for the other two, presented them to Mrs. Kingsmill, the wife of one of the English officers.

This first example of his prowess as a marksman seems to have whetted Napoleon's appetite, for a few days after he distinguished himself by shooting three hens, following up this achievement next day by shooting a kid belonging to his groom, which he caught trespassing. This "sport" seemed to afford him much amusement, for he sent one of his servants to buy some young goats for him, in order that he might serve them in the same way.

<sup>1</sup> On the 6th of February he got into trouble with his valet, Noverraz, by shooting two hens belonging to that person, who was so offended by this poaching on his preserves, that he wanted to leave Napoleon's service, and was only with difficulty dissuaded by the Governor from that extreme course.

<sup>2</sup> On the 12th of February he renewed his operations on the tame members of the lower creation by shooting a rabbit, which he caused to be let out for the purpose, following this up on the 14th by the slaughter of another goat, after having once missed it; while, on the 20th, yet another goat that had escaped from a small pen into the garden fell a victim to his deadly fowling-piece.

<sup>1</sup> *Lowé Papers*, vol. iii. p. 210.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 210.

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<sup>1</sup> A quarry of nobler kind next presented itself in the shape of a bullock, which, with a companion, was found, unfortunately for itself, trespassing on the sacred ground from an adjacent farm. He immediately sent for his trusty weapon, loaded with ball, and promptly proceeded to despatch<sup>1</sup> the intruder with a bullet through its neck. De Montholon informed the orderly officer that Napoleon had avowed his intention of treating similarly any other beast or bird that he might detect in the like intrusion.

This new diversion of the Emperor caused considerable uneasiness to those responsible for his custody, and it formed the subject of some anxious conferences. The Governor discussed the situation with Montchenu, the French Commissioner. Sir Hudson expressed the opinion that firing with ball appeared to him a thing <sup>2</sup> *très inconvenable* for a person in Bonaparte's situation, to which Montchenu rather unfeelingly replied that it most certainly was; and added that if the Emperor should happen to kill a man instead of a goat, the Governor would find himself unable to do anything with him, except perhaps, to confine him more closely. The dilemma which would have then presented itself opens up an interesting subject for speculation, but would seem to be in the nature of an insoluble problem. Napoleon's position was so absolutely exceptional, that it is difficult to imagine what

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. iii. p. 217.      <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 211.



could have been done in such circumstances. Under what law could he have been indicted, who had been declared by the civilized Powers of Europe to be outside all law? It would seem that beyond compensating the family of the victim, and politely requesting the incautious sportsman to be careful in future to take better aim, nothing could have been done. Fortunately, the dilemma did not arise, and the destruction was confined to the unfortunate brute creation.

It is pleasant to turn from this spectacle of grotesque degradation to another example of the good side of the Emperor's nature. We have seen already on two occasions how flashes of nobility of character lit up the gloom of his blood-stained career—once when he reprimanded Mrs. Balcombe for her unfeeling conduct towards a gang of poor black slaves, and told her to "respect the burden"; and again when the orderly officer kindly offered to infringe his orders by abstaining from accompanying Napoleon on his rides, a proposal which the Emperor refused to sanction lest it might get the officer into trouble with his superiors.

<sup>1</sup> And now, on a third occasion he showed the same consideration. A non-commissioned officer, in charge of one of the pickets placed around Longwood, had by mistake stopped some of the servants of the household while they were within bounds, and had demanded their names. As soon as Napoleon heard of the occur-

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. iii. p. 230.

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rence he was much concerned lest the mistake should get the sergeant into trouble. He at once sent de Montholon to Captain Lutyens, who had succeeded Nicholls as orderly officer, to request the Governor on his behalf that the offender should not be punished ; and calling Archambaud to him, severely rated him for having said anything about the matter.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### DEATH

WE have now arrived at the "last scene of all, that ends this strange, eventful history."

<sup>1</sup> Towards the close of 1820, Napoleon's powers were manifestly failing, and in the month of November his health grew rapidly worse. He was subject to frequent vomiting and acute pains in the stomach. His pallor became ghastly; he suffered from a deadly chill, and was much oppressed with drowsiness. He was usually confined to his bed, with Antommarchi in constant though useless attendance. When he did get up, his feebleness was extreme, and he walked with great difficulty. Early in December, he fainted after returning from a drive. He could not retain his food, and daily became weaker, though in spite of all, he obstinately refused to see Dr. Arnott. In Antommarchi he had, as we have already said, no confidence whatever.

Early in 1821 his attendants became extremely anxious, although no immediate danger was anticipated. He was still able occasionally to go for a

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. iii. p. 247.

drive, but required assistance in getting into and alighting from the carriage. Dr. Shortt, physician to the Forces, arrived at St. Helena, and his services were at once offered by the Governor in addition to those of Dr. Arnott, but the offer remained unanswered.

In February the Emperor was attacked with constant sickness, and the difficulty of retaining food greatly increased. It was found that meat jelly, made from veal, was most easily assimilated ; and the "inhuman" Governor immediately had a supply sent for Napoleon's use from Plantation House. The "brutal" gaoler furthermore despatched his cook to Longwood, as the *chef* was exceptionally skilled in soups, of which the unfortunate Emperor partook with great relish. So palatable was this delicacy, indeed, that de Montholon told Capt. Lutyens, "It was so good that the damned doctor would not let the patient eat much of it."

The new house was now ready, but alas ! the Emperor was destined never to occupy it. In his present condition he preferred to remain in his old quarters ; he felt, no doubt, that his career was rapidly drawing to a close.

<sup>1</sup> De Montholon tells us that he was a very difficult patient to manage ; worse than a child of two years ; he could do nothing with him.

During his last drive his mind had begun to wander, and his speech was incoherent. He still, however, obstinately refused to see another doctor. Soon he

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. iii. p. 266.

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ceased to take an interest in newspapers, or anything in the outer world. <sup>1</sup> The Governor saw de Montholon at Longwood, and on taking leave renewed his offer to send anything from Plantation House that Napoleon might be inclined to take. A strange action for a man who has been held up to execration as a monster of cruelty! De Montholon, at all events, was touched by Lowe's solicitude for the poor dying man, and gratefully expressed his thanks, saying, "I am perfectly sensible of your obliging offer, and fully persuaded of the attention you are disposed to manifest on this occasion."

Dr. Arnott tried to see Napoleon on the 25th of March, 1821, but could only get into communication with de Montholon, who said that Antommarchi called the disease "gastric intermittent fever." The Emperor now refused to take medicine, saying with infinite pathos, that he would leave his illness to nature.

At length Napoleon consented to receive Arnott, provided it was quite understood that the doctor would treat him just like any other patient. The assurance was, of course, given; it was the Governor's known wish. No bulletins would be issued, or if they should prove to be absolutely necessary, notice would be given to the Emperor's friends in the first instance.

Dr. Arnott visited Napoleon's bedside for the first time on the night of the 1st of April, 1821. He examined

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. iii. p. 268.

the patient's pulse and the state of his skin, and found considerable debility, but nothing to indicate immediate danger. In a letter to the Governor, Sir Thomas Reade stated that Arnott appeared to think that Napoleon was not affected with any serious complaint; it was probably more mental than anything else.

On the 16th of April, Arnott reported to the Governor that Napoleon was not so well; there appeared much prostration of strength, and his mind seemed greatly agitated. He himself pathetically told the doctor that he had abandoned all hopes of recovery, and that he well knew that anything Arnott could do would only be palliative.

On the 28th the Governor wrote Admiral Lambert that Dr. Arnott had informed him that the Emperor had become much worse than he had ever seen him before, and that his condition was very serious. Sir Hudson enclosed a note he had sent de Montholon, in which he offered the instant attendance of any medical man who might be on the island, as he had before offered the services of Dr. Shortt, physician to the Forces. Next day Captain Crockat, the new orderly officer, reported that according to de Montholon, Napoleon had passed a bad night, constantly talking and quite delirious.

At midnight on the 30th Napoleon was suddenly seized with chilliness, and became as cold as ice. His pulse was not perceptible, and he appeared as if he were

suffocating. Antommarchi was sent for and thought him dying; he rallied, however, from this attack.

<sup>1</sup> De Montholon told Arnott that he had mentioned to the patient the Governor's earnest desire that he should have additional medical advice, and that Napoleon had replied, "No. I know I am dying, but I have perfect confidence in the people already about me, and do not wish others called in." As Antommarchi and Arnott could not agree as to the proper treatment to be adopted, Sir Hudson made a last effort to induce the dying man to have additional advice. On the 3rd of May he called on de Montholon, accompanied by Arnott and Gorrequer, and said that where there was a difference of opinion such a course must surely be satisfactory to Antommarchi as it would relieve him of an immense responsibility, especially where life or death was in question. It was therefore arranged that as soon as the Emperor became unconscious the doctors should be admitted to the bedside.

By this time Napoleon was sinking rapidly. He wandered greatly, asked who was attending him, and on de Montholon replying, Antommarchi, repeated the name as if surprised, and said he did not know such a person, asking who he was. "Is it not," said he, "O'Meara who continues always to attend me?"

<sup>2</sup> Between three and four p.m. Antommarchi came to Gorrequer, who remained continuously at Longwood,

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. iii. p. 281.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 285.

and expressed his desire to have a consultation with the English doctors in his own room, saying Napoleon was dying and would probably not live through the day. Gorrequer immediately had Drs. Shortt and Mitchell summoned to Longwood by signal, and they soon arrived. The consultation was then held, although they did not see the Emperor. They prescribed some medicine, however, which afforded the Emperor temporary relief.

<sup>1</sup> Napoleon died on the 5th of May, 1821, at about ten minutes to six in the evening. By a curious coincidence, while he was in the last agony, a violent tempest swept over the island, shaking houses to their very foundations, and uprooting many large trees, a fitting accompaniment to the death of him who had himself for twenty years been a devastating whirlwind, shaking down thrones, destroying kingdoms, and scattering death broadcast throughout the length and breadth of Europe. His last words, "*Tête de l'Armée*," were in keeping with his career.

Thus died, on a remote island in the Atlantic, the man whose name had for so long been the terror of the civilized world. Had he kept a due proportion between his objects and the means of accomplishing them, he might have founded a new and permanent dynasty in France, for there can be no question that as administrator and organizer he has no equal in history.

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. iii. p. 287,



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If genius be, as has been said, "an infinite capacity for taking pains," then was Napoleon Bonaparte indeed a genius of the highest order. His intellect, which could grasp at a glance the most complex affairs of state, could also descend to the minutest details of administration. That he raised France from the ruin entailed on her by Jacobinical madness to the zenith of prosperity, cannot be denied, although it proved to be but "a brief dream of unremaining glory." Her finances, which had been plunged into chaos, he re-established on a firm and sound basis, and if he ruled the French people with an iron hand far heavier than that of the old régime, it must be remembered that his system was approved and confirmed by the Nation. He tamed the Revolutionary dragon and harnessed it to his triumphal car. Under his rule order was evolved out of anarchy, and modern ideas reconciled with ancient monarchical forms. He had also that most invaluable possession of a ruler, the eagle glance that could by inspiration select the fittest instruments to carry out his vast designs. In Talleyrand he had the greatest Minister for Foreign Affairs that ever lived. In Fouché the most consummate, crafty and unscrupulous intriguer that ever manipulated a police force. It is true they both betrayed him at last, but that was the nature of the men, and so long as he was useful to them they remained faithful to him. Of his generals it is unnecessary to speak. It

is sufficient merely to mention the names of Ney and Davout ; Murat and Lannes ; Gouvion St. Cyr and Macdonald ; Marmont and Masséna, Soult and Junot.

And yet, after placing all these achievements to his credit, he left France bereft of the flower of her manhood, and with all the conquests of the Republic, the Consulate and the Empire vanished into thin air. At the close of his career France found herself restricted within the frontiers which she had possessed at the accession of Louis XVI to the throne. All the titanic convulsions which Europe had undergone for twenty years—the rivers of blood that had been shed, the devastation she had suffered, the millions that had been squandered in sanguinary wars—had resulted in this most lame and impotent conclusion.

| But more than all this, his insane ambition put back the clock of orderly progress for more than a generation. Exhausted by her long-drawn-out agony, Europe remained “like a corpse on the dissecting table,” under the grim and ruthless repression of the Holy Alliance. And as “the evil that men do lives after them,” the “Napoleonic legend” was the cause of the downfall of France in 1870, so that one may fairly say that Napoleonism in the end not only reduced France to her ancient boundaries, but deprived her of the only substantial fruits of the ruinous wars of Louis XIV in the loss of two of her fairest provinces.

The first Empire ended in the rout of Waterloo, the

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second in the colossal catastrophe of Sedan. France has indeed paid heavily for the "greatness" of the Bonaparte family.

So much as to France. For the rest of Europe, which is what most concerns Englishmen, he was an unmitigated blight and pestilence. He was the most inveterate and most dangerous enemy this country ever had to encounter. For nearly a generation he kept Europe in one continual convulsion, until at last his very name was used to frighten children in the nursery. When England, by her heroic determination, had stricken down this appalling menace to the tranquillity of mankind, a deep sigh of relief ran through the civilized world. For the first time for nigh twenty years men could go about their daily avocations, and sleep through the night, without being oppressed as with a deadly nightmare ; and after such an experience it was the highest statesmanship to take due precautions that the world should not be plunged back into barbarism.



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Henry ; the Abbé Vignali and three of the Longwood servants.

The autopsy clearly proved that death was due to cancer of the stomach, that organ being found to be in a shocking state. The liver was exceptionally large, but perfectly healthy, thus proving O'Meara's diagnosis to have been utterly wrong.

A report on the cause of death, attributing it to cancer of the stomach, was signed by all the doctors present, except Antommarchi, who expressed his concurrence with the opinion of the other medical men, but excused himself on the ground that the report was drawn up in a language which he did not understand. <sup>1</sup> The document was then translated to him, and he thereupon asked Bertrand what he should do. Bertrand, hostile to the last, forbade him to sign because, in the report, Napoleon was not styled "Emperor," and he would never consent that any attendant on his master should sign a document in which he was not recognized by the imperial title. (Letter from Dr. Burton to Mr. Goulburn, 13th of August, 1821.) It is important to bear these facts in mind, for Antommarchi afterwards, in his farrago of lies, asserted that the liver was affected by chronic hepatitis. The members of Napoleon's suite, however, were perfectly satisfied that the cause of death was as stated by the medical men, and Bertrand in his letters

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. iii. p. 293.

to his brother and Cardinal Fesch explicitly stated this without qualification.

Thus was the theory that Napoleon was suffering from chronic disease of the liver, induced by the insalubrious climate of St. Helena, entirely disproved. It must be clear to every reasonable person that wherever the Emperor had been interned, or indeed even if he had remained on the throne, he must sooner or later have succumbed to an hereditary complaint, against which the greatest medical skill was unable to contend.

<sup>1</sup> Arrangements were next made for the funeral, which was conducted with all the impressive pomp of a military burial. By a strange decree of destiny, the body was borne to the grave by British Grenadiers—those splendid soldiers against whom the “surging charges” of his squadrons “foamed themselves away.” All the officials of the island, military, naval and civilian, joined the cortège, which was swelled by a numerous body of the inhabitants. Troops, with arms reversed, lined the route, and military bands played a funeral march; while three volleys of musketry and a salvo of artillery boomed a requiem over the last resting-place of Napoleon Bonaparte.

<sup>2</sup> The grave was situated in the midst of a garden, in a deep ravine, and the ground had been previously consecrated. Two weeping willows spread their droop-

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. iii. p. 296.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 297.

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ing branches over the tomb, and a small fountain murmured near, the crystal water of which had furnished the Emperor with cool refreshment twice a day.

<sup>1</sup> The Governor had the sacred spot surrounded with iron railings, to preserve the trees from the too-obtrusive attentions of the Emperor's admirers, for hardly had the grave been closed when branches began to be broken off for souvenirs. It will show the depth of base malignity to which Antommarchi descended when we say that this thoughtful act of the Governor was by him attributed to the most unworthy motives.

<sup>2</sup> On the 12th of May Sir Hudson, accompanied by Sir Thomas Reade and Major Gorrequer, proceeded to Longwood for the purpose of reading the Emperor's Will, and taking an inventory of his effects. He there met de Montholon and Bertrand, and in their presence examined the papers and other property. On a table were found two gold snuffboxes, in one of which was a card, directing its presentation to Lady Holland; and in the second a similar card assigning it to Dr. Arnott in gratitude for his services. Dr. Arnott also received from his illustrious patient a bequest of six hundred napoleons, and later on the British Government awarded him an honorarium of £500.

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. iii. p. 297.

<sup>2</sup> *Derniers Moments de Napoléon*, Antommarchi, vol. ii. p. 131 (Paris, 1898).

<sup>3</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. iii. p. 299.

It is deeply to be regretted that Napoleon in his Will should have bequeathed the sum of ten thousand francs to Cantillon, the miscreant who had attempted to murder Wellington. The fact recalls us from the contemplation of a sad and solemn scene to the baser side of Napoleon's nature. The spirit which inspired this bequest will best be realized by the terms in which it was made :

"5. Ten thousand francs to the non-commissioned officer Cantillon, who has been tried for having attempted to assassinate Lord Wellington, and acquitted. Cantillon had as much right to assassinate that oligarch, as the latter had to send me to perish on the rock of St. Helena. Wellington, who instigated that crime, sought to justify himself on the plea of the interests of Great Britain. Cantillon, had he actually assassinated that Lord, would have been covered and justified by a similar motive, the interests of France, in getting rid of a general who had, in addition, violated the capitulation of Paris, and by doing so, made himself responsible for the blood of the martyrs, Ney, Labédoyère, etc. etc., and for the crime of despoiling the museums against the faith of treaties."

Thus did the "great" Napoleon in a document, the very nature of which brings the writer face to face with his last moments, give the impress of his approval to the assassination of his most illustrious antagonist.



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Let us turn from this to a more pleasing theme. <sup>1</sup> It is said, on the authority of Madame Bertrand, that Napoleon on his death-bed earnestly begged her husband to use every means in his power, consistently with honour, to effect a reconciliation with Sir Hudson, saying that he hoped the effort would be successful, as he himself had been the cause of the differences between them. Madame Bertrand further told Admiral Lambert, to whom she had communicated the Emperor's wishes in the matter, that her husband was very desirous to carry out this dying request. When the Governor was apprized of this, he instantly resolved to bury in oblivion Bertrand's past conduct, and gladly accepted the proffered reconciliation. Bertrand and de Montholon accordingly called at Plantation House together on the 12th of May, and were received by Sir Hudson in a friendly and courteous manner. Thus to the very last did the Governor continue to display the fine and chivalrous character he had shown all along, and prove himself to be a true English gentleman.

The death of the Emperor led to a general exodus. The French exiles left the island shortly after the event, and Sir Hudson and his family departed on the 25th of July, 1821.

The absurdity of Antommarchi's assertion that the Governor had instituted a reign of terror among the

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. iii. p. 299.

inhabitants was significantly shown by the following address which they presented to him before he left :

“<sup>1</sup> SIR,—

“As your Excellency is upon the eve of resigning your authority on this island, we the undersigned inhabitants cannot be suspected of views of an interested nature in respectfully offering our most sincere and grateful acknowledgments for the consideration, justice, impartiality and moderation which have distinguished your government.

“A prominent measure of your Excellency was a proposal, which might have been expected to have been unpopular in a Colony where slavery had long been recognized. Yet, Sir, it met with the instantaneous and unanimous approbation of the inhabitants; a result which affords no slight proof of our entire confidence in your concern for our welfare.

“Under the existence of such ties between Governor and governed, and your marked discountenancing of any rising indication of party spirit, it is easy to account for the tranquillity and comfort we have enjoyed during your Excellency’s residence amongst us.

“Finding we cannot have the happiness of the continuation of your Excellency’s government, we beg you will accept the assurance of our sincere, respectful and affectionate wishes for the health and prosperity

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. iii. p. 313.

of your Excellency and of every member of your family."

As this document pointedly observes, it bears sincerity on the face of it. The signatories could not possibly have been actuated by that species of gratitude which is said to be "a lively sense of favours to come." The Governor was about to leave them; they could expect nothing from him, and it is therefore a most valuable testimony to his sterling qualities, and to the regard in which he was held by all outside the infected area of Longwood. It must have been some small consolation for the six years of martyrdom Sir Hudson Lowe had endured from the feminine spite of his French tormentors.

<sup>1</sup> Another balm to his outraged feelings he received before his departure, in the shape of the following despatch from Lord Bathurst:

"I am happy to assure you that your conduct has received His Majesty's approbation. It is most satisfactory to His Majesty to observe that no measures were omitted by you for the purpose of placing at General Bonaparte's disposal the best medical advice, and of affording every relief and alleviation of his sufferings during the latter period of his life, of which his state admitted. After the discussions which have taken place between yourself and General Bonaparte's atten-

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. iii. p. 314.

dants, it is no inconsiderable gratification to observe that if your offers of service were latterly declined, the refusal to accept them seems to have arisen, not from any unwillingness on the part of General Bonaparte to do justice to your motives, but from the satisfaction which he expressed himself to feel in the talents and conduct of the medical officers who had been already selected to attend on him.

“His Majesty has further commanded me to avail myself of this opportunity to repeat that general approbation of your conduct during the time you have administered the government of St. Helena, which I have on particular occasions had so often the pleasure of conveying. Placed as you have been in a situation, which must under any circumstances have been one of heavy responsibility, but which particular events contributed to render yet more difficult and invidious, you discharged your arduous trust with strict fidelity, discretion and humanity, and have effectually reconciled the two main duties of your command, combining the secure detention of General Bonaparte’s person, which was of necessity the paramount object of your attention, with every practicable consideration and indulgence which your own disposition prompted, and your instructions authorized you to show to his peculiar situation.”

<sup>1</sup> On the 14th of November, 1821, Sir Hudson was

<sup>1</sup> *Lowe Papers*, vol. iii. p. 315.



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